

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT DATA SHEET

1. TRANSACTION CODE

A = Add
 C = Change
 D = Delete

Amendment Number

DOCUMENT CODE

3

COUNTRY/ENTITY
Worldwide

3. PROJECT NUMBER
936-5832

4. BUREAU/OFFICE
S&T/ED

5. PROJECT TITLE (maximum 40 characters)
Formerly: Applied Tech & Mgt for Educ Develop.
Advancing Basic Educ & Literacy (ABEL)

6. PROJECT ASSISTANCE COMPLETION DATE (PACD)

7. ESTIMATED DATE OF OBLIGATION
(Under "B." below, enter 1, 2, 3, or 4)

MM DD YY
07 31 91

A. Initial FY 89

B. Quarter 4

C. Final FY 98

8. COSTS (\$000 OR EQUIVALENT \$1 =)

A. FUNDING SOURCE	FIRST FY 89			LIFE OF PROJECT		
	B. FX	C. L/C	D. Total	E. FX	F. L/C	G. Total
AID Appropriated Total	500		500		40,000	40,000
(Grant)	()	()	(500)	()	(10,000)	(10,000)
(Loan)	()	()	()	()	()	()
Other U.S.						
1. Missions					30,000	30,000
2.						
Host Country						
Other Donor(s)						
TOTALS	500		500		40,000	40,000

9. SCHEDULE OF AID FUNDING (\$000)

A. APPROPRIATION	B. PRIMARY PURPOSE CODE	C. PRIMARY TECH CODE		D. OBLIGATIONS TO DATE		E. AMOUNT APPROVED THIS ACTION		F. LIFE OF PROJECT	
		1. Grant	2. Loan	1. Grant	2. Loan	1. Grant	2. Loan	1. Grant	2. Loan
(1) EH	600	690		0		10,000		10,000	10,000
(2)									
(3)									
(4)									
TOTALS				0		10,000		10,000	10,000

10. SECONDARY TECHNICAL CODES (maximum 8 codes of 3 positions each)

680 620 689

11. SECONDARY PURPOSE CODE

12. SPECIAL CONCERNS CODES (maximum 7 codes of 4 positions each)

A. Code

B. Amount

13. PROJECT PURPOSE (maximum 480 characters)

To assist LDCs to improve their capacity to plan, manage, and operate basic education systems with efficiency and effectiveness, from ministerial (macro) to classroom (micro) level.

14. SCHEDULED EVALUATIONS

Interim MM YY 07 92 07 97 Final MM YY 06 94

15. SOURCE/ORIGIN OF GOODS AND SERVICES

000 941 Local Other (Specify) 899

16. AMENDMENTS/NATURE OF CHANGE PROPOSED (This is page 1 of a _____ page PP Amendment.)

Change the title of the project from "Applied Tech & Mgt for Educ Development" to "Advancing Basic Education and Literacy" (ABEL).

17. APPROVED BY

Signature Clifford Block
 Title S&T/ED, Acting Director

Date Signed MM DD YY
 03 29 89

18. DATE DOCUMENT RECEIVED IN AID/W, OR FOR AID/W DOCUMENTS, DATE OF DISTRIBUTION

MM DD YY

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON D C 20523

ACTION MEMORANDUM FOR THE AGENCY DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES

FROM: S&T/ED, Clifford Block *Clifford H. Block*

SUBJECT: ABEL PAF

Problem: Your signature is required on the attached PAF for the Advancing Basic Education and Literacy (ABEL) Project (No. 936-5832). This project will support a field-oriented application of tools, methodologies and research experience gained from S&T/ED's major R&D projects: Learning Technologies, IEES, and BRIDGES.

Background: S&T/ED has been a leader in the development of prototype materials, and methodologies over the past decade. Significant advances have been made in our understanding of the application of technology such as radio to improving access to and the quality of instruction for primary school children. Strategies and procedures for evaluating entire education systems to bring about systemic, sustainable change has been a hallmark contribution to strengthening the impact of scarce donor and developing country resources. The creation of planning models, policy option simulations and the generation of research on critical issues related to the efficiency and quality of education, has created the promise of large-scale, empirically-based decision making and resource allocation among target ministries of education.

A.I.D. is recognized as a leader in the development of these illustrative tools and techniques. The Agency has lacked, however, a central resource mechanism for disseminating these products and knowledge and for supplying the technical support and monitoring assistance that would enable more USAIDs to embark on education projects or to strengthen existing ones. This project will enable S&T/ED and regional bureaus to redress this problem by providing support to developing countries and indirectly to USAIDs in four ways: 1) dissemination through seminars, TA, and written materials information and products developed under other S&T/ED and bilateral efforts; 2) field support and monitoring services through long and short-term TA, including project design, implementation and evaluation; 3) pilot studies and experimental research on topics and applications that hold above average risk, but above average possible returns; 4) short-term training on applications-oriented issues and problems. The project will have a special emphasis on underserved populations, especially girls, and will make a significant contribution to reducing gender and other social-based inequities in basic education.

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Close coordination with regional bureau education and desk officers is an essential ingredient of this project. The ABEL project will be the chief centrally-funded operational vehicle for assisting the Agency to comply with the Congressional earmark for basic education and to realize the implementation of the Sector Council Strategy for basic education.

A Congressional Notification is in process to notify Congress.

Discussion: This project has been developed with the assistance of a Technical Advisory Committee consisting of regional bureau education officers and representatives from PPC/PDPR and OIT. The PP was reviewed and approved by S&T/PO on March 28, 1989. The Education Sector Council reviewed and formally approved the PP at a meeting on March 29, 1989. The project components have also been discussed with and supported by staff from the World Bank and the IDRC.

Recommendation: That you sign the attached PAF approving \$10,000,000 of S&T funds for the 10 year LOP.

S&T/ED:GTheisen:3-29-89:W#5244n&3411R

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PROJECT AUTHORIZATION

Name of Country/Entity: Worldwide
Name of Project: Advancing Basic Education and Literacy (ABEL)
Number of Project: 936-5832

1. Pursuant to Section 105 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 as amended, I hereby authorize the centrally funded Advancing Basic Education and Literacy Project involving planned obligations of not to exceed \$10,000,000 grant funds over a 10 year period from date of authorization, subject to the availability of funds in accordance with the A.I.D. OYB/allotment process, to help in financing foreign exchange and local currency cost for the project. The project is also authorized to make use of the Development Fund for Africa, as appropriate.

2. The project consists of the development and dissemination of basic education sector tools, strategies, and methodologies to increase the quality and quantity of educational services available to primary school-age children, especially under-served populations including girls, within current level of educational expenditure. The project will provide: 1) dissemination of research, tools, and methodologies to improve the management and operation of education systems; 2) field support and monitoring for host country and USAID bilateral projects; 3) pilot studies and small-scale research on issues of educational access and quality; 4) short-term training on applied, operations oriented education themes.

3. Special conditions of approval: None

4. Source and Origin of Goods and Services:

a. Each developing country where training or other assistance takes place under this project shall be deemed to be a cooperating country for the purpose of permitting local cost financing.

b. Goods and services, except for ocean shipping, financed by A.I.D. under the project shall have their source and origin in a cooperating country or in the United States except as A.I.D. may otherwise agree in writing.

c. Ocean shipping financed by A.I.D. under the project shall, except as A.I.D. may otherwise agree in writing, be financed only on flag vessels of the United States.

5. Mission buy-ins are permitted through the life of the project up to \$30 million. Individual buy-ins are expected, in some cases, to exceed \$250,000 due to the nature of the anticipated scopes of work.

Antonio Gayoso
Agency Director for Human Resources
Date: 5/26/89

Clearances:

S&T/ED, CBlock C Block
S&T/PO, DSheldon D
GC/CP, Steve Tisa C. Matalan for 1
S&T/HR, RMcClusky R

Attachments:

1. Project Paper Face Sheet
2. Action Memo (Acting Office Director to Authorizing Official)

ADVANCING BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY (ABEL)
Project Paper

Office of Education
Bureau for Science and Technology
U.S. Agency for International Development

10 April 1989 (3254R)

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ADVANCING BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY (ABEL) PROJECT

Executive Summary

International agencies -- expressing renewed interest in basic education -- are striving to raise the quality of schools and the achievement of pupils. Recognizing that the efficacy of various economic development strategies rests upon literate and motivated young people, donors are coming together to craft interventions that boost the impact of local schools and, given severe resource constraints, prompt governments to utilize existing resources more efficiently.

AID/Washington is mobilizing staff and program resources to begin several new education projects. The Bureau for Science and Technology (ST/ED) can play a key role in assisting the regional bureaus, in-country AID missions, and governments. ST/ED can not only provide practical field support, including assistance with the management of in-country programs when missions are short-staffed. ST/ED also can apply several tried-and-tested tools, strategies, and research expertise to new basic education starts.

The ABEL project will provide (a) quick-response assistance to USAID missions seeking technical assistance in particular areas, and (b) specialized dissemination and in-country support in those areas where ST/ED holds a comparative advantage, drawing on experience with sector assessments, planning models, cost-effective classroom technologies, and research ranging from policy adjustment to school-level management and instruction.

The ABEL project also will work with USAIDs and governments in developing country-specific strategies for boosting the participation and achievement of girls. We are only beginning to understand why young females dropout of basic education institutions at such high rates. ST/ED, collaborating with the WID Office and USAID missions, will help develop innovative programs and set R&D strategies in this important area to encourage female participation in primary and secondary schooling.

The ABEL project will cofinance, with USAID missions and the WID office, basic education activities in the following four areas:

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Component 1 -- Dissemination of tools and materials useful to USAIDs in designing and implementing basic education projects.

Component 2 -- Pilot projects and research that experiment with innovative interventions, yield formative evaluation information on conventional projects, or investigate underlying causes of low school achievement.

Component 3 -- Project management and field support to USAIDs that have insufficient staff to mount a new initiative. This component includes assistance to governments and USAIDs on 'nuts-and-bolts' administrative problems that exist between education ministries and local schools.

Component 4 -- Short term training aimed at building institutional capacity within central governments or within local schools.

Each project component will focus on one of three levels of the educational system: (a) the central government or education ministry, (b) functions of management which link the ministry and local schools, and (c) school-level management and improvement of classroom instruction. Each intervention funded under ABEL should demonstrate how the eventual beneficiaries -- children in classrooms -- will benefit from the project's activities (and over what period of time).

ST/ED will invest \$10 million over the 10-year life of project. This will be matched by \$30 million in buy-ins over the LOP. Detailed in the PP, eleven USAID missions have expressed concrete support for the ABEL project, with specific buy-ins proposed. In addition, discussions with PPC/WID have been initiated to explore buy-in possibilities. The director has expressed interest, provided that project effects within targeted countries can be clearly observed. PPC/WID buy-ins would occur following an annual assessment of project impact. ST/ED believes that these buy-ins could contribute to an Agency-wide WID/Basic Education strategy.

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Section 1. PROJECT SUMMARY

Sector Issues

Literacy provides a broad foundation upon which sustainable economic growth and social well-being can be constructed. Indeed, developing countries have invested heavily in the expansion of basic education over the past four decades. Enrollment growth has been most dramatic since the early 1960s, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia [Note 1].

Yet this rapid growth in schooling -- and governments' current attempts to keep pace with burgeoning child populations -- are severely straining often-static resources available to the sector. Since the early 1970s, developing nations have been buffeted by sharp economic constraints: erratic commodity prices, worsening terms of trade, rising debt burdens, drought and failing agricultural conditions. Adjustments to world economic conditions, of course, influence aggregate levels of government spending. Thus national leaders are caught in a squeeze between rising numbers of children and skyrocketing social demand for schooling, yet declining public resources available to maintain real levels of support for their educational systems.

Four basic issues have arisen over the past decade as developing countries and donors have struggled to deal with these conflicting pressures. These issues become especially salient when mounting efforts to boost basic education's capacity to cost-effectively impart literacy:

- o School quality is eroding at the same time that sector spending (in real terms) is lagging behind growth in child population and enrollments. As quality declines, the literacy levels of children can not improve.

- o Improvements in quality depend, in part, on more efficient use of sector resources. Often upper-secondary schools and universities are heavily subsidized, while per pupil spending in basic education declines -- cutting most heavily into the level of instruction most benefitting rural populations and agricultural productivity. More linked to teaching skills and human capacities than to aggregate resource levels, the quality of pedagogy and classroom instruction often is poor.

- o Basic educational opportunities provided to girls are very limited. In many parts of the developing world, young

females contribute disproportionately to agricultural production and to the nurturing of children. Basic education's significant impact both on agricultural productivity and to dimensions of social welfare. Yet school institutions most benefit young males, especially in many countries in Africa and south Asia. When girls enter and remain in school, they achieve at equal or higher levels compared to boys. Yet female entry to, and persist through, primary school lags behind that of boys.

o Financing of basic education depends excessively on central governments. Social demand for schooling -- particularly at the secondary level -- must be met in part by distance education or private institutions. Simply maintaining current levels of educational opportunity and quality also will require greater community financing of primary schools.

In Section 2 this project paper details and documents these pressing sector issues. Before returning to this analysis, two strategic questions are posed. First, what types of interventions and improvements are governments and donors attempting in efforts to address these issues? Second, how will the new ABEL project contribute to these efforts?

AID Strategy and Project Strategy

Governments and donors have employed a variety of interventions to address these four troublesome issues. The World Bank, for instance, has of late emphasized the importance of sector reforms -- moves aimed at reducing subsidies at upper educational levels, enhancing support for basic instructional materials, and diversifying sources of finance. AID also has supported efforts to improve policy dialog and to build basic management information systems [Note 2].

AID -- and particularly ST/ED -- has invested considerable research and development resources in new classroom and learning technologies. This ranges from curriculum redesign efforts to the use of radio to better structure classroom instruction.

Between the central ministry and the school often lies an administrative structure, one which is often ineffective in distributing teacher paychecks, basic textbooks, and other instructional materials.

In the past, USAID missions and AID/Washington have supported projects aimed at improving institutional capacity at these three levels of the educational system. Within the Agency's renewed interest in basic education, the ABEL project will draw on prior lessons-learned, tools, and methods to advance educational improvements in central ministries, local schools, and within the administrative structures that link the two. The Office of Education within the Bureau for Science and Technology (ST/ED) is in a unique position to assist USAID missions and the regional bureaus. This office has experience in responding effectively to country-specific project demands and to creating a R&D program upon which innovative methods and projects have been built.

AID is not alone in its reinvigorated commitment to basic education. In February 1989, major multilateral donors (World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO, and UNDP) announced a major drive to raise literacy over the coming decade. AID has long recognized the importance of basic education and has identified it as a sectoral priority in its Blueprint for Development. Congressional earmarks within foreign aid legislation, enacted in FY88 and again in FY89, are additional signals that education will be the focus of members of Congress and a wider constituency interested in development problems. AID is under an imperative to expand its basic education efforts, and the need for new sectoral support services is clear and large.

AID must use its limited human resource budget wisely and efficiently in order to bolster its investments in other sectors and in economic development more generally. To do this it must ensure that "state of the art" findings from research and development activities are effectively transferred to Third World decision-makers. (The Agency must do this without replicating the R&D studies already conducted under AID and other donor auspices.) The lessons learned and tools produced need to be disseminated and implemented in those countries where conditions are favorable to transfer.

In order to adequately support Ministry of Education (MOE) development efforts, USAID missions need to be able to offer project development, monitoring and support services sufficient to realize project objectives. Under existing staffing constraints, the Agency cannot respond adequately to the technical and managerial support needs of new education projects. A project mechanism is required to provide the services that are immediately required by host countries.

The back-stopping of field projects should also focus on provision of technical consultants that can address 'nuts-and-bolts' administrative issues -- problems that often link the central education ministry's capacity to serve local schools. The ABEL project will emphasize this element of the educational system that has received relatively little attention from donors in the past.

For two decades AID has been a leader in the development of innovative technological and methodological solutions to education development problems. The transfer of technology is a process fraught with concern by recipients over the generalizability of experiments from one site to another, about the costs of failure as well as those associated with successful technological adaptation as well. Third world decision-makers need to assure themselves before they assure their constituencies that the use of non-traditional educational tools and techniques are both effective and affordable in their own countries.

At present, the Agency has no vehicle for conducting short-term research and experimental studies and for demonstrating and field-testing research findings and applications.

Underlying successful dissemination and implementation efforts is the existence of a trained, qualified cadre of individuals that can sustain a development activity once the life of project (LOP) is completed. Although bi-lateral projects have discrete sources of funding for project-related training, there is no central mechanism within AID to provide short-term training to education and other sector-related Ministry officials in general management issues as well as in "nuts and bolts" applications problems. This is true for all system levels from the central ministry to the school level. A centrally managed, systematic, sustained training program ranging from one week to one month that is conducted on a country by country as well as on a regional basis will allow the Agency to capitalize on the significant investments it has made in generalizable training materials and to better support its planned and extant education sector development projects.

The ABEL project has an LOP of ten years and a funding ceiling of \$40 million, \$10 million of which will be provided by ST/ED. A major buy-in from the WID office is being discussed. This will allow for development of an Agency-wide WID/Basic Education strategy, applied to specific country conditions and USAID missions demands.

In Section 2 we next turn to a more detailed discussion of (a) underlying sector issues, (b) ameliorative government and donor strategies, and (c) how the new ABEL project will be positioned to enhance AID's own capacity to contribute to the improvement of basic education.

Section 2. DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overview

The ABEL project will provide technical assistance to institutions and individuals who are working to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of basic education. These direct beneficiaries include central government staff, provincial education officers, and school-level headmasters and teachers (public and private sectors). Experience from prior ST/ED projects indicates that each of these actors could benefit from technical assistance related to improving the quality of basic education.

Before detailing project activities, this section of the PP (a) elaborates the intensifying problems of low school quality and efficiency, (b) outlines AID's prior experience in working with governments to address these issues, and (c) indicates how the ABEL project fits into the Agency strategy on basic education, particularly in assisting USAID missions considering new activities.

By way of introduction, we also lay out a framework within which ABEL project activities fit. The approach suggests that ST/ED can usefully help USAIDs by disseminating past and emerging products, tools, and research findings. ST/ED also can perform the practical task of helping missions monitor and manage new basic education starts, given very tight staffing constraints. At the same time, technical assistance provided through this project should be targeted on the three levels of educational systems: improvements in central policy and budgeting, nuts-and-bolts administration between the education ministry and the schools, and at the classroom level.

ST/ED recognizes that economic and social conditions, and their impact on basic education, vary across regions and countries. We do not assume that a particular intervention or research finding can be universally applied. Each project activity must be crafted to fit country conditions, as well as each USAID's interests and capacities. On the other hand,

basic education strategies taken in one country -- be it a classroom learning technology or a sector reform strategy -- can inform project design in a new country. ST/ED should be in a strong position to encourage this information and technology role.

Initiating a Dialog on Basic Education

This project paper suggests many forms of technical assistance, aimed at several different parts of educational systems. Yet the first step is to initiate a dialog with USAIDs expressing interest in basic education, then to carefully begin to match extant tools and strategies with each country's particular needs. The ABEL contractor must exhibit the capacity to open and sustain this kind of dialog, working closely with the regional bureaus. The variety of illustrative activities presented in this PP should not eclipse the importance of this early process of dialog and diagnosis within each collaborating government and USAID mission.

Web of Basic Education Problems:

Declining Quality, Inefficiency, Limited Opportunity for Girls

Governments -- seeking to boost literacy and their human resource base -- are faced with two contradictory forces. Child populations are growing at very rapid rates, especially in Africa and south Asia. Social demand for schooling is climbing, even in Third World countries with leveling population growth rates. On the other hand, governments face harsh economic constraints: falling commodity prices, increasing debt burdens, and erratic agricultural conditions. Resources available to the public sector are static or declining in real terms. Thus education ministries struggle to serve more and more students with shrinking resources. As a result, the quality of basic education is steadily slipping and other subsectors understandably hold tightly to their own resources and subsidies.

Declining School Quality. Total school enrollments in the Third World have quintupled since the late 1950s, rising from 100 million pupil to 500 million in 1985, yet many Third World governments are still under enormous pressure to expand basic education. In Africa, education ministries must provide 100 million more primary school places just to maintain current enrollment rates between now and the year

2000. Between 1985 and 2000, the developing world's school age population (6-17 years) will increase from about 1.0 to over 1.2 billion [Note 3].

Economic constraints, felt sharply in the 1980s, have dampened governments' hopes of maintaining historical rates of school expansion. Indeed leveling resources available to the sector are being spread more thinly over burgeoning numbers of pupils. In the poorest developing countries per pupil spending has fallen from \$44 to \$29 since 1975 (in constant dollars. The case of Malawi is illustrative. Child population is growing at about 3.7% per year, primary school enrollments at 3.2%. Yet real growth in recurrent spending is rising at just 0.6% annually. Thus per pupil spending is falling 2.6% each year. The ratio of pupils per teacher has risen from 41:1 to 63:1 since 1970 [Note 4].

As government resources are held constant or decline, teacher salaries remain protected while expenditures on basic instructional materials steadily erode. This is especially troubling since textbooks, teacher guides, pupil exercise books, and instructional technologies are empirically related to higher achievement. Evidence on the variation in teachers' salary levels shows no consistent link to the performance of their students [Note 5]. Since 1975, the share of recurrent spending allocated to instructional materials has declined from 9% to 4% in the poorest developing countries. Many African countries allocate less than 2% of their recurrent budget for instructional materials. The situation is similar in low-income countries outside Africa. Bolivia, for instance, spends just 80¢ per pupil for basic materials each year.

The effectiveness of many Third World schools is very limited. The first international assessment of achieved literacy (IEA), conducted in the early 1970s, found that students from Third World countries fell in the bottom 5% to 10% of student scores in the industrial world. The second international study of achievement in mathematics found that, even at the secondary level, Third World pupils (Nigeria, Swaziland, and Thailand) got half as many items correct as industrial country students on average. Cross-national measures of literacy are problematic. Nor should pupil achievement levels be attributed solely to the school; external factors and labor demands on children clearly constrain their achievement in school. Yet the school's discrete impact, due to declining educational quality, is eroding in many countries.

Improvements in educational quality are not solely dependent upon freeing new resources, or concentrating resources upon a limited number of children. The quality of teachers stems from human capacities, improvements in pedagogical practices, and better management at the school level. Change here requires human know-how and technical advances as much as shifts in aggregate material resources available to basic education. Unless the quality of primary and secondary school graduates improves, the quality of new teachers may also decline, reinforcing this downward spiral in educational quality.

Inefficiency. Significant improvements in school quality clearly will require additional resources. A good deal of resources can be captured by addressing substantial inefficiencies apparent within educational systems. Resource scarcity is not always the dominant problem. In Mali, for instance, the government allocates just 1.7% of its primary education budget for textbooks and essential instructional materials. Yet despite this resource poverty at the primary level, the secondary schools and teacher training institutions are vastly overstaffed (with pupil:teacher ratios of 13:1 and 3:1, respectively). Such inequities between levels of instruction are particularly distressing, given that rates of return to education are higher for basic education, especially in societies dominated by agricultural production [Note 6]. More efficient resource utilization is necessary in allocating resources to levels of instruction that impart basic literacy, as well as those inputs and those inputs and human practices that most cost-effectively boost achievement [Note 7].

Pupil-level indicators of inefficiency also are informative. For example, in much of Africa, governments must invest over 20 years of recurrent resources to graduate just one primary school student. This is due to high rates of dropout -- 40% to 60% of children who enter primary school ever complete in Africa and south Asia. In Ethiopia, half of all children leave school before the fourth grade. In addition, grade-repetition rates are high, often exceeding 25% in the poorest countries [Note 8]. Again, low levels of student performance only in part can be explained by low school quality. Social and economic demands on children's time are great in many Third World communities. But if educational systems allocated scarce resources to those inputs and teaching practices that boosted literacy, this could significantly increase achievement.

Any progress in rationalizing public sector spending, and freeing capital for the private sector, must involve the education sector. Spending for education represents 20% to 35% of central government spending in developing countries. Greater efficiency in the public sector is intricately linked to education policy and budget practices.

Limited Opportunity for Girls. Female enrollments in basic education have improved since 1960, rising from just one-third of all primary school enrollments to 45% in sub-Saharan Africa and 40% in south Asia. Gender inequities remain severe, however, in many countries. Female enrollments still represent less than a third of total primary school enrollment in several west African and south African countries (including Chad, Central African Republic, Liberia, Mali, and Niger.) Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, and some regions of India have similar gender enrollment disparities. Females complete primary school at much lower rates than males. In rural areas of Africa, girls often are commonly outnumbered by boys in primary at ratios of 3:1. Within lower-secondary schools, females are grossly underrepresented, limiting their capacity to enter the modern wage sector.

The Education Sector Council within AID has proposed that the Agency basic education strategy seek to achieve an 80 percent primary school completion rate worldwide by the year 2000. This goal is simply unattainable unless the persistence rate of young females is improved.

This project paper emphasizes activities that boost the classroom performance and achieved literacy of boys and girls. While gender-based inequities exist with regard to the opportunity to enter and persist through primary school. Yet some evidence suggests that once in school, female pupils achieve at higher levels than boys.

Again, strong forces external to the school institution contribute to gender inequities. Yet the school itself can be seen as an institution linked to the male-dominated institutions and economic roles. Or the school's purpose can be more integrative and inclusive, emphasizing literacy and skills useful in a variety of adult roles. Schools alone can not change how a culture or economy define gender-specific roles. However, schools -- through hiring practices, curricula, and pedagogical practices -- can signal broader roles for females and impart basic skills in a more equitable manner. Selective expansion of basic education opportunities -- targeted on females -- should be a high priority within AID's overall initiative.

Mix of Government and Donor Strategies

Before the late 1970s, donors contributed resources either to expand the conventional basic education system or to provide instructional improvements (new textbooks, reformed curricula, or technological innovations like radio). Over the past decade, as economic constraints have tightened, donors have attempted (a) to leverage sector policy and budget adjustments, (b) focus on efficiency improvements, rather than school construction, and (c) target resources on basic instructional inputs, such as textbooks. This shift in the strategy of some donors emphasizes that quality and efficiency gains require a strong technical input, and that governments will in any case naturally emphasize school expansion (given political and social pressures operating in many developing countries) [Note 9].

Government and donors have attempted to improve management and resource allocations at three levels. First, macro efficiency and quality improvements can be addressed, in part, at central government levels. For instance, allocations between levels of instruction, or between salaries and basic materials, can only be influenced within policy circles. Second, AID and other donors have invested some resources in seeking to understand classroom and school-level practices that can boost achievement. This includes long term experiments with new learning technologies (radio) and competency-based curricula. Third, the World Bank and the British ODA program have focused on 'nuts-and-bolts' administrative problems that limit the central government's capacity to manage local schools. This involves myriad issues, including distribution of teacher pay, production and distribution of textbooks, and developing a school inspectorate that is encourage instructional improvements.

ABEL Project Rationale

Purpose and logframe. The ABEL project seeks to assist host governments in improving the quality and efficiency of their basic education systems. In putting forward this project, the Office of Education argues that this goal will be served by (a) disseminating tried-and-tested tools and methods, (b) supporting pilot projects and research; (c) liaising with USAID missions in the design and implementation of new projects, with an emphasis on TA that helps governments with nuts-and-bolts administrative issues; and (d) providing short-term training for in-country managers and school-level

staff. The project logframe, appearing on the next page, specifies the project purpose and discrete objectives.

The ABEL request-for-proposals will signal that the contractor must be able to disseminate tools effectively and must be able to employ consultants with extensive experience in nuts-and-bolts administrative and implementation issues (pertaining to the education sector).

Figure 1

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

NARRATIVE SUMMARY	END OF PROJECT STATUS	OBJECTIVE MEANS OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
GOAL			
To improve the quality of primary education in participating LDCs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School achievement level of LDC students in participating countries increases by one year on average. - Literacy rate among participating LDC populations aged 20 and under increases by 5%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNESCO Statistical compilations from national records. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Available tested techniques & materials are feasible means of improving LDC school quality. - Improved school quality will result in improved pupil performance.
PURPOSE			
To assist LDCs to improve their capacity to plan, manage, and operate basic education systems with efficiency and effectiveness, from ministerial (macro) to classroom (micro) level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10 Implement/strengthen planning and management units in LDCs. - General level of LDC interest in education planning has increased. - 10 Operational sub-systems re-designed and strengthened in terms of basic, applied skills and routine procedures. - 5 Policies and programs implemented/ tested that will enhance education/literacy for under-served populations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education plans are being used as basis for budgeting and management decisions. - Analysis and evaluation done routinely with policy/decision-making impact. - Inquiries to project; attendance at project workshops. - Reorganization of structure and procedures for routine operational tasks. - Examination of government policies and programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data-based planning will result in tangible improvement of LDC basic education systems performance.
OUTPUTS			
DISSEMINATION			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sector and/or subsector assessments carried out in participating countries. 2. Software packages adapted, installed, and in regular use for EMIS, planning, and gender issues. 3. Tested techniques and materials (TTMs) disseminated and adopted by participating LDC school systems. 4. Research results consolidated, synthesized and distributed. 5. Curriculum and strategies for increasing female school achievement developed and distributed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 15 Assessments completed and accepted by host country. - 10 Countries using the package in day-to-day operations. - 15 TTMs being used. - 20 Research abstracts published and being used by missions and host country governments. - 5 Countries implementing strategies and using curricula. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessments published, Project reports. - Packages assembled, project reports. - TTMs designed, project reports. - Publications, project reports. - Project reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LDC governments are willing to invest in efforts to improve their institutional capacity in educational planning. - Project tools and techniques will produce tangible systems improvements.

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

NARRATIVE SUMMARY	END OF PROJECT STATUS	OBJECTIVE MEANS OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
PILOT PROJECTS/RESEARCH			
1. Pilot Incentive Projects (PIPs) for increased female participation carried out.	- 10 PIPs implemented.	- Project reports.	- LDC governments will invest in improving educational opportunities for girls.
2. Research on girls' persistence in school and other gender-related issues implemented.	- 20 Empirical studies, - 3 Longitudinal studies, and - 7 Short-term papers completed.	- Studies published.	- WID financing will be available.
3. Formative evaluations accomplished in participating countries.	- 10 Projects provided with timely formative evaluations.	- Evaluation reports.	
4. Pilot trials of innovative classroom instruction methods accomplished.	- 10 LDCs accepted pilot trials.	- Project reports.	
5. LDC researchers trained in analytic techniques.	- 30 LDC researchers using newly acquired techniques.	- Documents produced by LDC researchers.	
FIELD PROJECT MONITORING			
1. Nuts and bolts improvements in education systems of interested LDCs.	- 10 Countries using techniques. - 20 Workshops. - 10 Pockets of instructional/applications material produced. - 30 Short-term TDYs completed.	- Technical assistance reports and training materials.	
INPUTS			
<u>BUDGET</u> \$(000)	- S&T/ED research completed and disseminated.	- Contractor Vouchers - AID disbursement reports	- Central Bureau Resources will be available.
S&T/ED 10,000	- Any ongoing Research and Dissemination shifted to Missions and LDC institutions.	- Project audits - Project final report	- Missions will follow through on buy-in plans.
Buy-Ins 30,000	- Participating LDCs utilizing TTMs, EMIS, and other techniques in school systems. - Long-term technical assistance for project implementation shifted to USAIDs and host country.		
<u>Total</u> 40,000			

ST/ED -- through the ABEL project -- will provide quick-response assistance to USAID missions. The components of the project provide flexibility, allowing support in backing-up field projects, drawing on existing tools and research findings, and providing short-term training. The ABEL project principally will serve host country officials and school-level staff involved in raising the effectiveness and efficiency of basic education. This assistance -- given ST/ED's role and expertise within the Agency -- can best be provided through a flexible and responsive mechanism that ensures collaboration with USAID missions and the regional bureaus.

The ABEL project is not intended to duplicate other current ST/ED activities. ABEL will support dialog with governments and USAIDs about application of prototypes and tools developed under other ST/ED projects. Countries with no basic education activities, and countries receiving no ST/ED support presently will be given priority.

Overview of technical assistance. In short, the ABEL project will provide technical and managerial support to help host country governments mount basic education programs. For AID to play a thoughtful and substantial role in the basic education subsector, the Agency's own institutional capacity must be developed, at both an administrative and a technical level. AID is undoubtedly increasing its overall effort in basic education. But whether these projects will be of high technical quality -- judged by their impact on resource allocations and eventually on student literacy -- remains an open question. Consolidating and disseminating lessons-learned and proven tools will increase the odds that AID can demonstrate an impact on the achievement of children over the coming decade.

ABEL's anticipated forms of technical assistance (financed by ST/ED or mission buy-ins) can be illustrated within the four project components:

Dissemination

a) Short-term TA that applies ST/ED's sector assessment methodology to identify key points of intervention;

b) Short-term TA to help USAIDs design new basic education starts, drawing on successful projects that have worked in similar country conditions;

c) Stateside workshops and in-country TA to disseminate tools and methods that form components of new basic education starts (for instance, MIS software, policy adjustment strategies, competency-based curricula, classroom technologies, textbook production and distribution guides).

Pilot projects and research

d) Pilot projects to test the efficacy of new basic education interventions, including various incentive programs to increase girls participation, testing of classroom technologies, or limited MIS and planning trials;

e) Short-term and long-term assistance in conducting research that leads to or guides existing basic education projects. Specialized TA in WID-related issues will be an area of special emphasis required of the ABEL contractor;

f) Short-term subsector studies that serve as inputs into project design;

g) Long-term assistance with AID project evaluations (both formative and summative), to ensure that quick and large investments in basic education can be adjusted as new projects unfold.

h) Targeted research reviews that speak to high priority issues and particular country conditions, produced stateside and disseminated to USAIDs active in the education sector.

Backing-up Field Projects

i) Long-term TA to monitor implementation of new basic education starts;

j) Technical assistance on 'nuts-and-bolts' administrative issues that constrain central governments' capacity to serve and manage local schools. This assistance will be provided through short-term TA, and include exchanges of American school officials.

Short-term Training

k) In-country and regional workshops on shared areas of interest (including policy and budget analysis, instructional materials production, school supervision, headmaster training, and reviews of classroom interventions that work);

l) Dissemination of training materials developed under prior ST/ED projects that can be used for in-country and stateside participant training programs.

Summary of Project Components

Figure 2 illustrates the basic project organization. The ABEL project has four principal components: dissemination; pilot projects and research; field back-up and technical assistance; and short term training.

Project interventions are then aimed at three levels of the educational system. These basic levels or topics cut across the four project components as illustrated in Figure 1. These levels include (a) engaging in policy dialog and sector adjustment within the central government and education ministry, (b) improving nuts-and-bolts management tasks that occur between central ministries and local schools, and (c) formulating direct school-level interventions that effectively boost pupil learning.

The priority placed on these three level stems from prior work in the education sector by AID and other donors. ST/ED and the regional bureaus have established a track record in each of these three forms of intervention. The activities discussed below are congruent with the Education Sector Council's 1988 recommendations, concerning sub-sector investment priorities, and provide a clear delineation of the parameters of project activities.

USAID Mission Response to Project Design

Following completion of the PID, a cable was sent to all USAIDs that authorized the ABEL project and solicited input on its design. Responses have come back from 28 missions to date. Twelve missions expressed concrete interest in the sector and proposed future buy-in support. The substantive priorities of these USAIDs are outlined below. Six

additional missions indicated a need for the project but could not afford a buy-in at this time. Eight USAIDs indicated little interest in the project, given that (a) they were not working in the education sector, or (b) existing USAID education projects were deemed sufficient at this time. Two USAIDs (Mogadishu and Tegucigalpa) will respond when the appropriate staff person returns to the mission.

Priorities expressed by the twelve USAIDs with substantial interest in the ABEL project follow:

Figure 2

ABEL PROJECT: MATRIX OF PROJECT COMPONENTS

		LEVELS		
		A. Central Information and Policy Adjustment	B. Ministry-to-School Management	C. School Management and Classroom Technology
COMPONENTS	1. Dissemination of Tools and Materials			
	2. Pilot Project and Research			
	3. Field Project Backup			
	4. Short - Term Training			

AFRICA

Cameroon. USAID would like to build on HRDA training project to create a 'basic education subproject' to include: in-country training for policymakers and educators (public and private education sectors), regional seminars, and study tours. The mission would like assistance in conducting a training needs assessment and in designing country-specific training activities. Policy dialog also encouraged to find more cost-effective forms of instruction, including radio learning experiments. Buy-in of \$1 million estimate.

Mali. Mission expresses initial interest in working with ABEL to implement their new basic education project. USAID will support activities in central ministry management, WID research and perhaps pilot programs, and cost-effective forms of teacher training. The Mali PID/PAIP also suggests a role for ABEL in monitoring and formative evaluation of the overall World Bank sector reform operation. Buy-in in the range of \$0.5 to \$1.0 million is possible.

Botswana. USAID has a large education portfolio, involving three bilateral projects and participation in ST/ED's IEES project. The mission is beginning to discuss follow-on project(s) that might consolidate existing activities. Interest in ABEL centers on research and evaluation work, as well as TA in the national exams area. Assistance from the ABEL project might also support current efforts in teacher training and curriculum development.

Malawi. The mission is supporting a limited sector review exercise over the next few months. This may or may not result in a new basic education project. If the mission and the Africa Bureau decide to move ahead, USAID would be interested in R&D activities in the areas of radio education, inservice teacher training, cost-effective improvements in pedagogy, development of less expensive learning materials, and private financing of education.

ASIA / NEAR EAST

Morocco. The mission is currently monitoring the World Bank's sector adjustment activity. Interest in modest buy-in to support WID-basic education study (\$100,000). USAID seeking to better understand factors underlying low female attendance and alternative forms of basic education that may better serve girls.

Egypt. USAID expresses interest in a central project that can provide a quick response to technical assistance needs of the ministry as it leads far-reaching educational reforms. Operational research, linked to 'nuts-and-bolts' administrative improvements, is of significant interest to the mission. Modest sector studies seen as useful, as well as help in designing participant training programs. USAID proposes a buy-in of \$1 million, provided that 'Egypt benefit is guaranteed to be no less than the buy-in.'

Bangladesh. A modest sector review was conducted in March 1989, financed by ST/ED. The mission is actively following the World Bank's appraisal of a large education project. USAID indicates that complementary basic education activities could include a more thorough sector assessment, efforts to improve management within the ministry's secondary school directorate, encouragement of private financing for secondary schools, development of competency-based curricula, and research related to female participation and teacher motivation/performance. The mission expresses interest in buying into ABEL at a level of \$5 million LOP. This depends upon the mission's budget ceiling over the next few years.

Nepal. The mission has been active in ST/ED's IEES project and requests clarification on how it relates to the new ABEL project. The mission also is trying to consolidate modest education activities into a 'new' project that they would like to formalize through a project paper exercise. This may lead to technical assistance needs in the following areas: further development of the education MIS system and application to actual policy and budget changes, and extension of radio education activities. Buy-in to ABEL, IEES, and/or Radio Learning projects would total about \$1.5 million.

Thailand. The mission elicited input from the education ministry which is incorporated into USAID's expressed interest in ABEL and ST/ED's current BRIDGES project. The mission and government share an interest in quality improvements at the primary school level and in boosting participation in secondary school. The following specific activities are indicated by USAID, linked to a proposed buy-in of \$2.5 million over the next five years: assessment of the policy and budgeting process within the education ministry; studies to determine why social demand for secondary schooling is limited; experimenting with vouchers or alternative ways of financing basic education; and strengthening management information systems.

LATIN AMERICA

Ecuador. USAID is initiating pre-design activity for a radio learning project. Technical assistance through ABEL would be a high priority, including to work on female access to, and benefit from, radio instruction. In addition, the mission expresses interest in beginning a policy dialog process with the education ministry, supported by seminars and in-country workshops. USAID would like pre-design assistance on developing a 'policy matrix' for basic education, and a study of institutional capacity and problems in the sector. A buy-in of \$50,000 is proposed.

Guatemala. The mission reports that they are adequately staffed for work in the education sector. But short-term TA would be helpful in the following areas: (1) policy dialog, planning, and management information within the ministry, (2) teacher training improvements, (3) design of project evaluations, and (4) assistance in exchange of master teachers. USAID expresses buy-in interest of up to 2 person-months of TA for 1989-90 and 1990-91.'

Barbados. USAID concerned with deteriorating school quality at the primary level; interested in supporting low-cost instructional materials and innovative teacher training schemes. The mission anticipates a \$500,000 buy-in over five years.

Next, we turn to a detailed discussion of illustrative activities to be supported under each of the four major project components.

COMPONENT 1. DISSEMINATION OF TOOLS AND MATERIALS

Overview

ST/ED projects have been successful in recent years in producing prototype tools and training materials that have cross-country application. Other bilateral AID projects, such as the EPP project in Indonesia and the Improving Efficiency of Learning project in Liberia, also have generated products that, with little adaptation, can be applied in new settings where similar applications are called for. Disseminating products with success requires not only knowledge of the problems and the services required to solve them, but also a carefully thought out marketing and implementation strategy. The ABEL project will place heavy emphasis on the development of marketing tools and strategies to maximize the breadth and quality of impact of proven tools and materials.

Among the prototype tools and materials to be disseminated are the following:

- a) Sector assessment methodologies;
- b) Computer training and MIS software designed for education managers;
- c) Policy analysis training materials and techniques;
- d) Radio instruction packages, effective for improving in-class instruction at the primary school level;
- e) Competency-based curriculum materials;
- f) Operations research, project evaluation, and other empirical research methods, with special priority on understanding factors driving female participation and achievement.;

The ABEL project constructor will maintain a roster of consultants who are experts in one or more of these areas and who are familiar with the products identified. The contractor will work with ST/ED to rationalize and better package existing tools, products, and research findings.

COMPONENT 1. DISSEMINATION OF TOOLS AND MATERIALS
Level 1A. Central information and policy adjustment

Objective and activities. This element of ABEL's dissemination component seeks to achieve the outcomes, via the following illustrative activities:

a) Improve the policy dialog process with governments, in order to stimulate policy and budget actions which enhance the efficiency and quality of educational systems. Such policies may address the equitable distribution of scarce resources between basic education and other subsectors. Policy change also influences how education resources are spent, across various instructional inputs, learning technologies, and teaching practices (that hold differing levels of cost-effectiveness in boosting pupil learning).

b) Enhance the availability and quality of information available to central ministry management officials that indicates how much children are learning, including gender differences in acquired literacy levels.

c) Conduct sector assessments or more focused analyses that (i) identify policy and budget constraints on educational quality and efficiency, and (ii) point to specific school-level and/or management interventions that would yield the greatest impact on pupil learning. These analyses should be linked for concrete plans on how policy and budget changes could improve the effectiveness of local schools and the efficiency of the sector overall. The development of 'policy implementation maps' could provide a clear sequence of fiscal or policy changes. This sector work also may feed into project design activities that would be funded by USAID missions through buy-ins to the ABEL project or competitive bidding.

d) Dissemination activities focused on female participation in basic education, including information on (i) education policies affecting gender equity in teacher training, (ii) incentive programs to reduced the opportunity costs associated with female enrollment, (iii) alternative education structures, such as distance education, (iv) curriculum design strategies that speak to girls' social and economic roles and aspirations, (v) inclusion of health, nutrition, child development, and family planning themes in curriculum reform efforts, and (vi) the organization of in-country seminars on female education.

e) MIS and research tools related to gender issues also will be disseminated, including disaggregation of school-level data useful in policy reform; application of gender software and projection models; research tools and questionnaires that can be used on WID-basic education research; and subsector studies that lead to the design of WID-related initiatives.

Funding for gender-related activities is expected to be jointly provided by ST/ED and PPC/WID. Whole or partial mission funding would be expected for extensive subsector assessments or travel for ministry personnel.

The tools, methods, and research findings referred to in this PP have been developed under current ST/ED projects, including the IEES, BRIDGES, Radio Learning, Learning Technologies, and related communications projects. A complete list of possible products and tools appears in Appendix 1.

Priority inputs. Short and long term TA comprises the greatest share of project resources dedicated to this component and topic. Meaningful, systematic, sustainable

policy and budget reforms require a long-term, and trusted presence in-country. The ABEL contractor will assist USAIDS in identifying short term consultants and top-notch experts who can serve in-country as resident advisors. Stateside-based dissemination of materials will also be done by the ABEL contractor. The project will provide for limited investment in publications and distribution (largely consolidating and modifying/focusing existing materials, papers, and software). Regional and country-specific seminars will be supported on a case by case basis.

COMPONENT 1. DISSEMINATION OF TOOLS AND MATERIALS
Level 1B. Ministry-school management links

Central objectives: This element of the dissemination component aims to increase the planning and management capabilities of technical advisors, planners, and managers at both central ministries and those working at provincial and school levels. These administrators, usually working below senior policymakers, are engaged in a variety of essential activities: producing and distributing teacher pay, deploying and managing the teaching force, producing and distributing textbooks, and supervising local school headmasters. Technical assistance on these 'nuts-and-bolts' aspects of the educational system is sorely needed in many countries. Here we outline how dissemination and training activities will be cast. The actual form and content of this area of educational management is detailed below under Component 3, backing-up field projects. This split is made, given that these actual topics and issues overlap substantially with AID's in-country management of project implementation.

Activities. A number of the outcomes associated with this component of the project involve technical assistance and training. The training envisioned under this component is different, less in type than in degree, from the activities described under Component 4 (short-term training). Here 'dissemination' training is envisioned as a medium to long-term effort (2-24 months) associated with full implementation of a tool or a process. For example, the building a province's capacity to operate a MIS system linked to personnel management requires sustained training and support over at least 18 months. A preliminary step to the decision by a ministry to establish a management information system might be participation in a two week overview seminar/training activity that focuses on the advantages of and issues surrounding the development of an MIS. Such a seminar would fall under the training component of the ABEL project.

To achieve dissemination objectives in this area, the ABEL project contractor will engage in the following kinds of illustrative activities:

a) Technical assistance, both short and long-term, will be provided for the design and implementation of project activities focused on nuts-and-bolts management improvements. Core funding may be used to assist missions to initiate project conceptualization and design and to engage in preliminary feasibility and applications studies;

b) Training seminars, developed as part of a comprehensive strategy to meet one or more of the objectives defined above, will be conducted as necessary to maximize the likelihood of sustainability upon the termination of external technical assistance. (The ABEL contractor's responsibilities for short term training are specified in Component 4.);

c) Research reviews and case studies that illustrate ways of attacking these nuts-and-bolts management issues that exist between the central ministry and local schools;

d) Provision of information to missions and regional bureaus on how governments and donors have attempted to lessen these ministry-to-school management problems. Review papers and in-country short-term TA will aid in dissemination experience in other countries;

e) Provision of specific information on how these administrative issues impact the status of female teachers and pupils, including job security and motivation of female teachers, adequacy of school supervision in addressing WID related concerns, administration of services which encourage greater female participation, and how personnel systems treat females with career ladders and pay scales.

COMPONENT 1. DISSEMINATION OF TOOLS AND MATERIALS

Level 1C. School management and classroom technology

Objective. To expose in-country policymakers and educators to ideas, techniques and tools which would enhance the quality and efficiency of their schools.

Specific activities supported under this element of the TEEM project include the following:

a) The contractor will assemble an inventory of tested techniques and materials (TTMs) which have demonstrated their

value in school management and classroom learning. Colombia's 'unitary school' approach to managing multigrade classrooms is an example of tested school management techniques; competency-based curricula also have been developed in Botswana and Liberia. Special emphasis should be placed on finding TTMs which enhance the performance of girls.

b) The contractor will analyze the TTMs to determine what factors are important for their successful application such as the kinds of pupils for which they work best, the level of teacher preparation needed, school environment, and so on. This analysis should result in hypothesis formation as to where each TTM would be likely to work best, and these hypotheses should be briefly tested in sample applications.

c) The contractor will develop several options for presentation and dissemination of the TTMs. The range of options should extend from simple responses to general requests for information to full scale hands on, mixed media workshops. These options should be audience tested and modified as necessary to assure that they will be usable and effective in conveying their message to the various clients.

d) Dissemination will then be implemented throughout the LOP via a variety of modes, including but not limited to consultancies, workshops, publications, videotapes and broadcasting.

e) With regard to female participation and school achievement, the contractor also may engage in the following types of activities: (i) Analyses of curricula for relevance and effectiveness with girls, including provision of female role models, knowledge relevant to female employment opportunities, and information related to nutrition, health, and family planning; (ii) case studies of support services, supplies, time, and parental support for schooling of girls; (iii) dissemination and revision for local application of gender targeted curriculum modules and radio learning approaches; (iv) research on classroom interaction patterns and gender differences in how teachers interact with pupil that may be related to relative achievement levels; and (v) school level workshops on gender awareness and teacher strategies for improving the performance of girls. PPC/WID may buy into the ABEL project to help support these dissemination activities.

Implementation and management issues. The ABEL contractor will solicit invitations from USAIDs which have some interest in the problems of school management and learning

technologies. The central project budget will fund initial visits and possible small-scale workshops as means of fostering thinking and dialog. Wherever feasible, the next phase of ABEL intervention will involve more extended demonstrations and trials, lasting several weeks to several months.

In general, this would complete ABEL's dissemination activities. However, there may be cases in which the Mission would request continued linkage. Such continuation of involvement would not be for purposes of dissemination. It would likely be to build a research component into a bilateral project, or as a buy-in where such an arrangement was found to be desirable, and will be discussed further in those sections of this paper.

The contractor will have responsibility for all aspects of this topic with funding and backstopping from ST/ED, except for the extended trials and demonstrations, which will be funded by USAID buy-ins. Management of each buy-in would be the joint responsibility of the Mission and ST/ED. Clear understanding of USAID expectations, responsibilities and involvement would have to be established in each case. ST/ED will draft a prototype agreement which can be modified as necessary to fit each buy-in.

Summary of Dissemination of Tools and Materials Deliverables

Deliverables for all four components of the ABEL project are enumerated in Figure 3. Under the Dissemination Component, the following deliverables will be required of the ABEL contractor over the life of project:

1a. Sector assessments and/or limited subsector analyses (15 exercises in total), including targeted studies of female participation and achievement.

1b. TA linked to policy dialog and sector adjustment programs (in at least 5 countries), including development of 'policy adjustment maps' within program assistance portions of bilateral basic education projects.

1c. Rationalization and installation of software packages (in 10 countries) related to basic management information, assessing budget and policy options, and addressing gender issues.

1d. Selection and rationalization of instructional design strategies, classroom technologies, and school-level

management approaches that work ('TTMs') which have been proven, particularly within previous and ongoing ST/ED projects.

le. Dissemination of TTM's, including print publications, other media, and short-term TA (the latter will be provided in about 20 countries).

lf. Consolidation and marketing of research results stemming from current ST/ED projects. Major inputs needed here for analytic reviews and publication of research abstracts.

lg. Distribution of curriculum materials and communication strategies related to female achievement, including units related to nutrition, child care, health, and family planning (in at least 5 countries).

COMPONENT 2. PILOT PROJECTS AND RESEARCH Levels 2A/B. Central policy and ministry-school management

A primary thrust of the ABEL project is to disseminate tools, methods, and lessons-learned to host-country officials in countries with new basic education activities (as specified above). In addition, the project will support demonstration projects and research activities that advance our understanding of how to improve educational quality and efficiency.

This component will, in large part, focus on designing and implementing pilot projects that encourage greater participation and persistence through basic education by female students. These pilot projects on female education will be informed by empirical research that illuminates the underlying causes of low female participation in basic education. Girls enter primary school at about the same rate as boys in most countries. However, girls dropout with much higher frequency in much of Africa and south Asia. With less time in school, girls achieved literacy suffers. (Whereas, girls who do stay in school at times outperform boys.)

Strategies to assist policymakers and local administrators. In general, Component 2 will attempt to develop a stronger knowledge base in the following areas:

a) Knowledge about the cost-effectiveness of alternative interventions. This may include pilot incentive projects (PIPs) that encourage girls to persist through primary or lower secondary schools, e.g., pilot efforts also may be

mounted to experiment with low-cost production of textbooks and other learning materials, and applying new print technologies (e.g., desktop publishing).

b) Formative evaluation. AID's project evaluation system presently emphasizes post hoc summative evaluations, conducted by external actors. This does little to improve project activities in a formative way. AID has invested considerable resources in textbook production, only to find that the books are sitting in warehouses or that the texts are beyond the actual reading skills of pupils. The ABEL project will provide expertise in formative evaluation to minimize such costly mistakes.

c) Evidence on the causes of low pupil participation, and achievement. Both policy reform and school-level interventions are built on (oft untested) assumptions about the antecedent causes of low student performance. For example, early interventions aimed at boosting female persistence and achievement make different assumptions about constraining factors: distance to school, cost, lack of female teachers as role-models, or labor demand and opportunity costs. However, evidence on the extent to which these factors actually shape levels of female performance is lacking. This component of the ABEL project seeks to advance knowledge of the underlying causes of low pupil performance. Research findings will inform choice among alternative policy reforms and school-level interventions.

Activities. To move toward these objectives, the ABEL contractor may perform the following types of R&D activities:

a) Limited technical assistance in support of pilot or research efforts to help governments and USAID missions devise policy and fiscal reforms that would further educational quality and efficiency objectives.

b) Focused experimental efforts to implement agreed upon structural changes in the school system, such as lengthening instructional time, new school calendars that mesh better with agrarian parents' demand for children's labor, or alternative forms of delivering instruction.

c) Modest start-up efforts in a country's selected provinces or districts to demonstrate the benefits (and costs) of improving local educational management, including initiatives that spark community financing of school construction and recurrent costs.

d) Pilot incentive projects (PIPs) to encourage girls' persistence through school and to improve the quality of their classroom experience.

e) Technical assistance in support of formative evaluation of new or existing basic education projects, again to identify the relative cost-effectiveness of alternative project strategies.

f) Support for original research that examines among other issues, the problems of low school persistence and attained literacy among children, especially young females and other under-served populations. This work may involve country case studies, reviews of project evaluations, and pulling together extant empirical work on the causes of low pupil achievement. These literature reviews of 'what works' will be coordinated closely with the Latin America Bureau's new field support project, and with ST/ED's BRIDGES project. Both of these projects are synthesizing lessons-learned from a variety of project evaluations and empirical studies.

g) Examination of the gender structure of educational management at various levels and the implications of that structure.

h) Demonstration of how curricula can be linked to women's income generating activities.

i) assess feasibility and impacts of alternative and distance education programs for female teachers in rural areas;

j) support evaluation, training, and incentive programs to increase the numbers of female school heads and supervisors, especially in rural areas.

ST/ED's tools, methods, and classroom technologies. ST/ED and bilateral AID projects have produced a number of highly successful interventions and products, some of which have applicability in other countries (see Appendix 1). Officials in host ministries and USAID education officials frequently express need for limited testing of "non-traditional" education interventions or project ideas prior to project design. The ABEL project will support such demonstration projects, especially when they relate to boosting female participation and performance in basic education.

To maximize the impact of the research, proposals for pilot studies and empirical, small-scale research undertakings will be developed by the contractor in close collaboration with S&T/ED and A.I.D. mission and regional bureau officers as appropriate and possible, as well as with country education officials. Proposals will be submitted for review by the ABEL Technical Advisory Committee at their quarterly meetings. Substantive issues will be addressed in the review and proposals will be modified as necessary to improve their relevancy and quality. All research proposals or pilot studies are subject to the final approval of the project CTO or S&T/ED designate.

COMPONENT 2. PILOT PROJECTS AND RESEARCH
Level 2C. School management and classroom technology

Objective and strategy. Under Component 1 (dissemination) we described how the ABEL contractor -- drawing from AID's prior experience, tools, and research evidence -- will select a subset of activities that focus on improving school-level management and classroom instruction. This process will be matched by a discussion with interested USAID mission, and host-country officials, about their interest in school management and classroom technology issues. Such concerns include improving headmasters' capacity to nurture instructional improvement, developing more cost-effective methods of inservice teacher training, and/or experimenting with competency-based curricula, perhaps linked with radio instruction. Whatever the particular interest, the ABEL contractor will attempt to match selected TTMs with mission and country interests.

Illustrative examples of R&D at the school level. Pilot projects and research should focus on the following issues:

- a) Improving the headmaster's capacity to administer and motivate his/her teaching staff, including enlarging the headmaster's role to encourage technically-sound instructional improvements;
- b) Experimenting with and institutionalizing pedagogical practices that better motivate pupils and lead to higher levels of pupil achievement, with a particular focus on female achievement;
- c) Research on what types of instructional materials and teaching practice do cost-effectively boost pupil achievement;

d) Piloting new competency-based curricula and learning technologies that better structure lessons;

e) Comparative trials of different forms of inservice teacher training, including long term reinforcement of change in teachers' classroom behavior, again with an emphasis on how female students are treated in class.

Method and inputs: Pilot projects may be started through short-term TA or with assistance from in-country collaborators. Original research and formative evaluation activities require specialized expertise. ABEL's prime contractor may subcontract for the necessary empirical studies. Mission buy-ins to ABEL may include local currency provisions and cash incentives to encourage female pupils to stay in school. Cash incentives (in local currency) for encouraging early retirement of teachers could help open up job slots for young female teachers. ABEL resources may leverage matching funds from PPC/WID, USAID missions, DFA monies, or financing from other donors, especially for those R&D efforts that address female performance issues.

Management issues. The success of pilot projects and research will depend, in large part, on in-country management and skilled technical experts (provided through short term TA). Where possible, in-country education ministry and university researchers will be involved in these knowledge development activities. In addition, USAID mission staff and the ABEL contractor must display strong leadership in implementing pilot projects and research activities.

Material inputs will be minimal for Component 2, with the exception of local currency and related incentives for both beneficiaries of pilot projects and for in-country research staff.

The ABEL contractor will develop an overall plan for implementing pilot projects and research. This plan should concentrate on using scarce staff resources effectively, and specify topics of highest priority. Some examples of possible high priority areas might be studies of management of multigrade classrooms, profiles of effective school principals, or peer teaching techniques.

Summary of pilot projects and research deliverables

Deliverables for all four components of the ABEL project are enumerated in Figure 3. Under the Pilot Project and Research Component, the following deliverables will be required of the

ABEL contractor over the life of project:

2h. Pilot incentive projects (PIPs) to encourage female participation and persistence through primary school (piloting or cofinancing in 10 countries).

2i. Original research on factors related to low female persistence through primary school, including assessment of central policy levers. This element will deliver 7 short-term studies and papers, and 3 longitudinal studies and a research report series.

2j. Conduct formative evaluation work, with 10 USAID missions, to ensure sound project implementation.

2k. Pilot trials of innovative methods of classroom instruction (in not more than 10 countries).

2l. Original research on high-priority topics, including female education interventions that have worked, cost-effectiveness of different teacher training strategies, and classroom-level studies that examine differential treatment of boys and girls (at least two empirically-based research papers a year).

2m. In carrying out research efforts, short-term TA shall work with at least 30 counterpart researchers in-country, and pass on specified analytic competencies.

COMPONENT 3. FIELD PROJECT BACK-UP

Levels 3A/B: Central policy and ministry-school management

Field project issues and objectives. Despite the fact that 11 education officers were recruited in 1987, the Agency is still critically short of individuals with degrees and or experience in the education sector (BS 60s). At present a half-dozen education positions are unfilled in AID/Washington and in the field. The current hiring freeze does not allow an easing of this shortage.

Despite this dilemma, the Agency is committed to begin basic education projects in eight new countries over the next three years. Without sufficient, experienced staff to negotiate, design, and manage these proposed new starts, USAIDs are understandably reluctant to move into the sector.

The ABEL will provide a mechanism for backing-up new projects, both through technical advice in designing projects

and in supporting staff that will liaise with host-country governments and USAID missions. Final management accountability, of course, will reside with AID direct-hire staff.

The project all will provide access to teams of experts covering a wide range of sector issues, with special emphasis on those problems and tools discussed as special areas of advantage within S&T/ED in this PP. The teams of contractors will not replace the services offered through IQC contracts. IQCs are specifically for discrete, one-time-only tasks. Services offered under IQCs are available for only a short, non-renewable period of time.

ABELs uniqueness lies in the projects capability of providing very applied, long-term, relatively low-cost field support that would not otherwise be available. Although the ABLE project will provide very responsive services to interested missions, emphasis will be placed on more sustained efforts linked to sectoral development or to charting new courses for USAIDs and ministries in education, especially at the primary level. Special capacities will not be developed under ABEL to replace IQC services supplied on activities such as evaluation or general management training. ABEL will also not move into new areas that lie outside of the skill/services parameters defined in this PP.

The project will capitalize on the cumulative knowledge and experience of contractors working on similar design and implementation problems in a variety of countries. The buy-in mechanism should offer missions greater control, continuity, economy, and increased efficiency in procuring the services needed for project development and support activities.

Activity 1 / USAID back-up with new starts. The ABEL project will support short-term TA that will assist governments and USAID missions in the following ways:

- a) Assist in designing new basic education projects;
- b) Select and monitor short-term technical assistants who are supported through bilateral or ABEL funding;
- c) Liaise with governments and USAID missions to ensure effective implementation of basic education projects. Technical advisors and ABEL project staff may assist in the implementation of USAID field projects. But they can not, of course, conduct official business appropriate only for direct hire staff.

Activity 2 / 'Nuts-and-bolts' management assistance. ABEL's field support component also includes assistance with the 'nuts-and-bolts' administrative issues that link the central ministry with local schools (often through provincial education offices). The management of educational systems often breaks down at this intermediary level -- paychecks arrive two months late, textbooks remain in warehouses, inspectors rarely visit schools. Taken together these basic logistical problems lead to poor teacher attendance or inadequate instructional resources in classrooms -- eventually damaging the quality of instruction and levels of achieved literacy.

The ABEL project, as it backs-up new mission projects, will assist in minimizing these implementation bottle-necks. Adjunct staff funded under this component of USAID field support will likely get pulled into these basic administrative problems. Therefore, this area is covered in this section of the PP, as well as within dissemination and short-term training components.

Nuts-and-bolts issues and project activities. AID's in-country experience suggests that the following management issues are most pressing in many developing countries and most directly related to pupil achievement.

(1) National examinations systems are both powerful and often technically inadequate in reinforcing appropriate literacy and more complex cognitive skills. If properly managed exam systems can be an important tools in improving basic education. Too often, they are used to legitimate the rationing of secondary school or university places, with little attention to the type of information and cognitive skills that they encourage. National exam systems often are inefficiently operated and financed. The U.S. holds a technical advantage in helping to improve exam systems.

(2) Teacher salaries represent over 90 percent of the total recurrent costs of education in many developing countries. According to a World Bank survey, African teachers' salaries are higher in relation to national income than in other developing countries. For example in Francophone Africa, the average primary school teachers' salary is 1.8 time the average salary in other countries. In Ethiopia, the average primary school teachers' salary is ten times the GNP per capita. Implications for total sector spending are enormous. Substantial savings could be made by even marginally changing teachers' salary rates.

Another important factor determining teacher salary costs is the average teacher-pupil ratio. Many developing countries have been encouraged to increase this ratio by reducing the average class size. There has been little evidence, however, of a relationship between class size and pupil achievement level in developing countries. These and other determinants of salary schedules form complex networks of policy variables that must be considered when budgeting and salary scheduling takes place [Note 9].

ABEL technical advisors will provide expertise on how to formulate, manage, and improve salary systems. Services will include hands-on-training in the mechanisms of budgeting, calculating direct and indirect salary costs, computerizing salary data bases, and analysis of promotion, retirement, and related policies.

(3) Textbook Production and Distribution

Textbooks are cost-effective tools for raising academic achievement. Consequently, textbook projects have received increased attention by governments of developing countries and by international and national organizations committed to providing them with assistance. Yet production and distribution problems abound in many developing countries. Although it would be most desirable to be able to publish and manufacture books in home territory, it is not always cost-efficient as books manufactured locally are not necessarily cheaper. Distribution of textbooks also is problematic when vehicles and fuel are scarce, procedures for purchasing texts involve provincial education offices or local villages, and inventory controls are not effective.

ABEL will provide consultants, including American educators, who have experience in the textbook/learning materials design and production. They will provide assistance on topics ranging from matching production equipment with needs, lay-out of production facilities, training in desk-top publishing to graphics production, and determining the cost-effectiveness of run sizes, and book durability.

(4) Establishing effective school supervision is critical in implementing new basic education projects, not to mention long-term monitoring of headmasters and teachers. Here too, transport costs limit the effectiveness of school inspectors. In addition, the colonial emphasis on regulation of discrete administrative behaviors by headmasters persists in many developing countries. Efforts to broaden the headmaster's role, to encourage instructional improvement, are sorely needed. In Mali, for example, the inspectorate

now includes 'pedagogical counselors' who work both with headmasters and teachers to improve instructional techniques.

The ABEL project will provide assistance to host countries in defining supervisory activities that hold promise for improving the quality of instruction in schools. Seminars, development of evaluation procedures, and in-service training schemes are among the products that the ABEL contractor will help to develop.

Other nuts and bolts issues that may receive attention include but are not limited to, budgeting, scheduling, teacher transportation, equipment supply and maintenance, statistical reporting, and facility design, building and equipment maintenance, inventorying, financial, personnel and commodities management.

COMPONENT 3: FIELD PROJECT BACK-UP

Level 3C: School management and classroom technology

Objective. The ABEL contractor also will assist USAIDs in finding skilled experts who can help implement school and classroom improvements. The previous section focused on the fundamental logistical problems that exist between the central ministry and local schools. The present section focuses on school and classroom management and instructional practices. A part of ABEL's field back-up responsibility speaks to these school-level issues.

Activities under this element will include the following types of tasks:

a) Identify a roster of potential short- and long-term technical assistance personnel. The number of persons so identified need not be large, as the roster's initial purpose will be to establish for interested USAIDs the project's ability to field such people.

b) Short- and long-term technical assistance may be provided, in particular, to aid efforts aimed at boosting the performance of female students and/or teachers through the following types of school-level improvements: inservice training for teachers, flexible school schedules, after school programs, child care services, use of radio instruction, other learning technologies, peer tutoring schemes, use of parent volunteers, assistance to private schools, and experiments with single-sex classrooms and/or schools.

c) Place long term TAs after agreements are signed with the USAID and involved host country institutions. It will be the contractor's responsibility to provide ancillary inputs as needed to support the TA in carrying out the scope of work.

d) Provide long term resident advisor(s) whose primary focus will be improving quality and efficiency of education for girls through policy dialogue, dissemination of tools and information, research, and provision and coordination of technical and management assistance for specific activities. Such advisor(s) would be appropriate in countries which had identified improving the persistence and performance of girls in primary schools as a priority for action.

Management and financing issues. Long term TA will be funded by mission buy-ins. However, out-of-pocket costs of TA activities which support only the overall project aims, such as attendance at international conferences, will be paid from core funds to the extent possible. TAs, salaries will continue from buy-in funds during such activities, since they will be of limited duration.

For any given gender-related scope of work, only the initial assistance (one or two trips) would be funded by central monies. On-going long or short term assistance would be mission funded, possibly with a match from PPC/WID.

Summary of Field Project Back-up Deliverables

Deliverables for all four components of the ABEL project are enumerated in Figure 3. Under the Field Project Back-up Component, the following deliverables will be required of the ABEL contractor over the life of project:

3n. Central funds will only provide bridge financing (in not more than 6 countries and with not more than \$0.2 million) when USAIDs want to maintain momentum with a new basic education start. Long term (technical or administrative) back-up activity will be financed through buy-ins.

3o. 'Nuts-and-bolts' TA to provide ministries and local schools support with distribution of instructional materials, personnel management, and national examination improvements (TA input total about \$1 million LOP, over about 10 countries). This TA is expected to equate to approximately 30 short-term TDYs and in the development of training/guidance materials for approximately 10 topical areas.

COMPONENT 4: SHORT TERM TRAINING

Objective. Short-term training in support of project objectives is a critical element underpinning the three components described above. Although mid to long-term country-specific training is provided under the scope of component one (dissemination), shorter term seminars of one week to one month in duration are important for several reasons: (a) to sensitize policymakers and technicians to essential theoretical and practical concepts associated with management and implementation issues; (b) to provide training in areas of future functional performance of individuals who currently have little applicable experience or training; (c) to develop regional indigenous training capacities that will transcend the LOP.

Country-specific seminars. These seminars will be conducted by the ABEL contractor at the request of country and USAID officials. Training will focus on country-specific applications related to the prototype products described in Component 1 (dissemination). The ABEL project will cover the cost of producing or adapting training materials on the topics described in this PP. Upon award of contract, an inventory of training priorities will be undertaken by the contractor in conjunction with AID to determine what packages of materials will be developed. Operational costs of the in-country seminars, including travel, per diem and logistical arrangements will be provided by USAIDs, other donors, or the host country. ABEL will provide materials and will negotiate the cost of consultant services on a case by case basis. Training course materials will be developed for seminars on up to 10 topics.

Regional Seminars. In order to transfer management technology and tools to third world settings in a sustainable way, it is imperative that third world educators have regionally-specific institutional capacity to conduct training for officials in similar geographic/contextual settings.

In collaboration with the Economic Development Institute (EDI) at the World Bank and other donors such as IDRC and the Asian Development Bank, the ABEL project will help to create additional training capacities at three established research and/or training centers located in developing countries. It is anticipated that one center each will be located in Africa, South Asia, and Latin America.

ST/ED will solicit funding from USAIDs, regional bureaus, and other donors to help defray costs or to supplement project materials. Seminar topics will be confined to those dissemination products, and nuts and bolts issues identified in earlier sections of this document.

Following approval of the PP, ST/ED management will proceed with formal negotiations with the EDI to develop a plan for selecting permanent training sites, for scheduling seminars, and for reaching agreement among cooperating institutions on budgets and procedures.

By the PACD, a cadre of 10-15 trainers will be developed through seminars conducted under project auspices, and approximately 1,100 policymakers and technicians will have benefited from the materials and TA provided to the seminars. ABEL resources will be used to develop the training materials for the substantive aspects of the seminars as well as for the development of pedagogical materials to train the trainers who will form the core staff of the regional centers. EDI has expressed strong interest in supporting the regional training center concept and is assessing the feasibility of providing maintenance, salary, and per diem costs to staff and participants.

U.S. Based Summer Seminars. Many senior education officials, whether they be employed by ministries of education, or by universities, have no formal training in practical, pedagogical matters. Deans, department chairmen, office heads and other education managers and decision-makers often did graduate training in the sciences, business, agriculture, or were promoted from administrative positions in the military.

The ABEL project will offer two, two-week seminars each summer for the LOP at a U.S.-based university, or private establishment for students enrolled in participant training (PT) programs at U.S. institutions. Approximately 30 individuals will be admitted per seminar with 20 positions reserved for AID-funded PTs and 10 open for students sponsored by other donors or private sources.

The objective of the seminar is to expose students who are prospective education leaders and administrators to tools and methods that will enhance their performance as managers and decision-makers. Topics that may be covered in the seminar include: principles of planning, budgeting, curriculum and syllabus development, evaluation, testing, and innovative

technologies. The purpose is to provide education and non-education specialists with a basic arsenal of management tools and methods for improving school effectiveness.

ABEL will develop materials and organize the course with core-funding. Via a worldwide cable announcing this component of the project and soliciting expressions of mission interest, add-ons to PIO/Ps will be encouraged to underwrite the tuition and per diem costs of AID-funded participants.

During the LOP approximately 500 students are expected to enroll in the seminars. The materials developed will be made available to AID-assisted countries, USAIDs and institutions of higher education that can verify/demonstrate a commitment to developing similar programs within their own countries or institutions.

The training component of the ABEL project is not meant to be an umbrella participant training umbrella for the education sector. Sponsorship of seminar participants under core funding will not exceed a total of 10 person weeks per year. Funding for travel and per diem and associated costs are expected to come through one of three mechanisms: 1) buy-ins to the ABEL project (buy-ins less than \$25,000 total value can be expected during the LOP); 2) PIO/Ps issued against existing bil-lateral or regional umbrella training projects; 3) support provided by other donors for participation in the seminar.

Summary of Short-term Training Deliverables

Deliverables for all four components of the ABEL project are enumerated in Figure 3. Under the Short-term Training Component, the following deliverables will be required of the ABEL contractor over the life of project:

4p. Country-specific seminars will be designed that are linked to short and long term TA on those topics indicated above. (About 10 seminars, with at least 5 focused on female participation and achievement issues.)

4q. Three regional seminars per year for approximately five years will be designed, including exploration of cofinancing of a regional training center in Africa.

4r. U.S. based summer seminars for not more than 30 participants in each of 5 summer sessions.

Included in the core support for training will be up to 12 person months of TA for the regional seminars per annum; up to 20 person months of TA for the in-country seminars; and up to 12 person months of TA for the summer seminars.

SECTION 3. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Overview of Deliverables and Required Inputs

ABEL project deliverables, set within general budget allocations for each project component, are summarized in Figure 3. Major project inputs required to produce specified deliverables are then enumerated in Figure 4. These inputs are listed by project component and within functional categories. The project budget, displayed by conventional expenditure categories, then appears in Section 4 of this project paper.

Implementation Time-Table

Procurement schedule. USAID missions are beginning to formulate new basic education strategies and projects. Prompt issuance of the project RFP, following approval of this project paper, is highly desirable if project services are to be delivered in a timely manner. A draft RFP will be submitted to the contracts office within 10 days of PP approval. FY89 funding for Year 1 of the ABEL project should be allocated to the prime contractor by September 1989.

Project timeline. The first 12 months of the project will focus on (a) setting-up the contractor's office, (b) following-up with USAIDs that have expressed demands and interests, (c) hiring of key personnel by the contractor, (d) developing the first annual implementation plan, in consultation with AID's inter-bureau project committee, and (e) working-out the project management structure within ST/ED, drawing from staff members' particular strengths.

During the first few months of the project, the contractor must also move to review existing ST/ED tools and strategies, and develop a dissemination strategy for selected products.

Figure 5 presents a longer-term timeline which is tied to project deliverables. Dissemination activities based on previous project inputs from IEES, Learning Technologies, BRIDGES, Radio Learning, etc. occur early in the project to benefit new starts. Dissemination activities, in general, will continue throughout the LOP as new educational technologies and methodologies are developed. Research activities also begin early on in each project cycle.

Figure 3

ABEL Project Budget Parameters and Illustrative Deliverables
(Figures are for ten-year LOP, assuming \$10 million in central funds)

3 April 1989

ST/ED Centrally-Funded Deliverables

Buy-in Priority Areas

Component 1. DISSEMINATION

\$1,500 thou. LOP

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. Sector assessments and/or limited subsector analyses (15), including targeted studies of female performance. | USAID and Regional Bureau cofinancing for missions entering the education sector. WID funding for exploratory work with USAIDs. |
| b. TA linked to policy dialog and sector adjustment programs (in 5 countries), including development of 'policy adjustment maps' within program assistance bilateral initiatives. | |
| c. Rationalization and installation of three software packages (in 10 countries) related to basic EMIS information, assessing policy and budget options, and addressing gender issues. | USAID cofinancing for MIS components of policy assistance and sector reforms. |
| d. Selection/rationalization of instructional design strategies, classroom technologies, and school-level management approaches that work ('TMs') employed in prior ST/ED projects. | |
| e. Dissemination of TMs specified in 'd' above. Dissemination activities will include print publications, other media, and short-term TA. (The latter will be provided in 15 countries). | |
| f. Consolidation and marketing of research results stemming from ST/ED projects. Major inputs needed here for analytic reviews and publication of 'research abstracts.' Dissemination will be to all USAIDs with education activities, various governments, and professional journals. | |
| h. Distribution of curriculum materials and communication strategies related to female achievement, including units related to nutrition, child care, health, and family planning. (Short term TA may aid implementation of in up to 5 countries.) | USAID and WID cofinancing when curriculum or social marketing efforts focused on female participation and achievement. |
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Centrally Funded Deliverables**Buy-in Priority Areas**

Component 2. PILOT PROJECTS AND RESEARCH

\$1,800 thou. LOP

- | | |
|--|---|
| i. Pilot incentive projects (PIPs) to encourage female participation (piloting or cofinancing in 10 countries). | WID cofinancing, working with USAID-WID coordinators. |
| j. Original research on factors related to low female persistence thru primary school, including assessment of central policy levers. This element will deliver 7 short term studies and papers, and 3 longitudinal studies and research report series. | WID cofinancing when linked to policy or project-related action. |
| k. Conducting formative evaluation work, with 10 USAID missions, to ensure sound project implementation. | USAID and Regional Bureau cofinancing. |
| l. Pilot trials of innovative methods of classroom-instruction (in 10 countries). | USAID cofinancing in conjunction with conventional project assistance. |
| m. Original research on high-priority topics, including female education interventions that have worked, cost-effectiveness of different teacher training strategies, and classroom-level studies that examine differential treatment of boys and girls (at least 2 empirically based research papers per year). | WID cofinancing when research is linked to country conditions, government and USAID priorities. |
| n. In carrying-out research efforts, short-term TA shall work with at least 30 counterpart researchers in-country, and pass on specified analytic competencies. | |

Component 3. FIELD PROJECT MONITORING

\$ 900 thou. LOP

- | | |
|--|--|
| o. Central funds will only provide bridge financing (in not more than 6 countries and not more than \$0.2 million in central funds) when USAIDs want to maintain momentum with the new start. Long term field monitoring will be financed through buy-ins. | USAID and Regional Bureau cofinancing, with ST/ED providing only bridge support. |
| p. 'Nuts-and-bolt's TA to provide ministries and local schools support with distribution of instructional materials, personnel management, and national examination systems (TA input total about \$0.7 million LOP, over about 10 countries). | USAID cofinancing within conventional project assistance, linked with participant training programs. |
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Centrally Funded Deliverables

Buy-in Priority Areas

Component 4. SHORT TERM TRAINING

\$ 500 thou. LOP

q. Country-specific seminars linked to short and long term TA on specific topics specified above. (About 10 seminars, with at least 5 focused on female achievement issues.)

WID cofinancing for in-country short-term training.

r. Regional seminars, including exploration of a cofinancing a regional training center in Africa.

Ministry and school-level managers supported, in part, thru USAID participant training funds.

s. U.S.-based summer seminars, for not more than 30 participants in each of 5 summer sessions.

Piggy-backing on participant training programs.

TEEM Project Administration and Overhead

\$2,500 thou. central project management

\$2,307 thou. contract overhead charge

t. Routine reporting with special emphasis on in-country impact and capacity building (especially demonstrated WID-related effects from project activities.

ST/ED Project Support

\$ 493 thou.

u. Evaluation reports, perhaps stemming from a formative assessment over LOP.

v. TAG and WID-Basic Education Advisory Group.

w. Technical papers and outputs defined in cooperation with the multilateral donors' basic education initiative.

W#3385R

Figure 4

ABEL Inputs by Project Component
 (Figures are for ten-year LOP, assuming \$10 million in central funds)

3 April 1989

Basic Inputs	Expenditures (in thous.)
Component 1. DISSEMINATION	\$1,500 (LOP)
a. Short-term TA for field work with USAIDs and governments, including sector assessments, studies, project design, and limited implementation activities.	\$ 800
b. Travel costs related to (short-term) in-country TA.	\$ 350
c. Stateside based consultants to help rationalize and package existing ST/ED tools, methodologies, and research findings. (Core project staff will perform much of this work.)	\$ 150
d. Material inputs related to publications and other media, including printing costs, media production, art and design work.	\$ 200
Component 2. PILOT PROJECTS AND RESEARCH	\$1,800 (LOP)
e. Short-term TA to assist USAIDs and governments with (1) pilot projects aimed at boosting female participation (PIPs), (2) pilot trials of innovative classroom technologies, (3) WID related research and other studies, and (4) formative evaluation efforts.	\$1,000
f. Long-term RTAs may be cofinanced, on a very limited basis, to carry-out WID-related and other pilot projects (augmented by Component 2, item h).	\$ 400
g. Travel costs related to (short-term) in-country TA.	\$ 400
Component 3. FIELD PROJECT MONITORING	\$ 900 (LOP)
h. Bridge financing to assist USAIDs in bringing on RTAs or PSC-like education officers. (Long-term costs must be covered by the missions).	\$ 300
i. Short-term TA to assist (a) governments with nuts-and-bolts management improvements, and (b) USAIDs with project design and monitoring tasks.	\$ 600

Basic Inputs	Expenditures (in thous.)
Component 4. SHORT TERM TRAINING	\$ 500 (LOP)
j. Short-term TA for design and delivery of short-term training (regional seminars or stateside). Core project staff will perform much of the design work.	\$ 250
i. Travel support for participants (cofinanced by USAIDs).	\$ 250
CORE PROJECT MANAGEMENT	\$2,500
j. Professional project staff (including a WID associate director, 1 research assistant, 1 budget person, and 1 secretary)	\$2,250
h. Office support and supplies	\$ 250
INDIRECT COST CHARGE (assumes 30% on direct costs)	\$2,307
ST/ED PROJECT SUPPORT	\$ 493
i. Two midterm, two final evaluation exercises	
j. TAG and WID-Basic Education Advisory Group	
l. Basic education initiative (with multilaterals)	

Figure 5
IMPLEMENTATION TIME TABLE

ACTIVITIES	YEAR											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
START-UP						X						
DISSEMINATION						X						
a. Sector assessments (5)						X						
b. Policy dialog & sector adjustment (5)						X						
c. 3 software EMIS packages (10)						X						
d. Rationalization of TTMs						X						
e. Dissemination of TTMs (20)						X						
f. Marketing of research results						X						
g. Gender curriculum & strategies (5)						X						
PILOT PROJECTS & RESEARCH						X						
h. Pilot incentive projects (10)						X						
i. (1) Long term gender research (7)						X						
(2) Short term gender research (3)						X						
j. Formative evaluations						X						
k. Pilot trials (10)						X						
l. Empirical studies 2/year						X						
m. Research counterpart training (30)						X						
FIELD PROJECT MONITORING						X						
n. Initial monitoring (6)						X						
o. Nut-&-bolts TA (10)						X						
SHORT-TERM TRAINING						X						
p. Country specific seminars (10)						X						
q. Regional seminars						X						
r. U.S. based seminars						X						
PROJECT ADMINISTRATION & ST/ED PROJECT SUPPORT						X						
s. Routine reporting						X						
t. Evaluation reporting						X						
u. TAG & MID Education Advisory Group						X						
v. Technical papers & outputs						X						
COMPLETION						X						

Long-term research continues throughout the LOP, whereas short-term activities with rapid turn-around begin early on to ensure that the results can be disseminated and incorporated into new starts. Field back-up activities are divided between initial activities in each project cycle to help missions design new starts and on-going activities throughout the project cycle. The short-term training activities occur at any point in the year throughout the LOP. U.S.-based seminars, however, will only occur each summer. The timelines for ABEL project administration and support activities are continuous and reflect AID reporting and monitoring requirements.

ST/ED Project Management

An ST/ED Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO) will be responsible for managing the ABEL Project. Over the life of the project (10 years), the CTO will spend 75% time on the project, coordinating work between USAID missions, bureaus and the contractor. The CTO will call on other ST/ED staff to monitoring certain elements of the ABEL project when these activities relate (a) to a staff member's particular expertise, and/or (b) to an existing ST/ED project.

Administrative strength will be required of the ST/ED CTO in maintaining communication between the parties involved (USAID missions and bureaus, host-country ministries and the contractor). The CTO also will ensure that close coordination occurs between the ABEL contractor and other ST/ED contractors responsible for complementary education projects (IEES, BRIDGES, Radio Learning and Learning Technologies). This will be problematic but necessary in mounting successful dissemination and other technical assistance activities.

Relationship with Regional Bureau and USAID Programs

An inter-bureau committee, composed of AID staff from S&T, each regional bureau, and PPC (including the WID office), will meet periodically to strategize, plan, and make recommendations about project direction. Each annual implementation plan, drafted by the contractor and eventually approved by ST/ED, will be vetted and discussed with the inter-bureau committee. ST/ED will handle daily management, overall strategy, and other official Agency reporting.

A major task, early in the ABEL project, is to review tools and methods employed by past and current ST/ED projects that may hold utility for USAIDs moving into the sector. The

inter-bureau committee will help advise the contractors in this review.

Mission and bureau buy-ins to the ABEL project will be budgeted and tracked separately from ST/ED central funds. Each USAID mission activity will require a separate workplan. Scopes of work for buy-ins will specify what elements of assistance will be supported through the buy-ins. Quarterly financial and technical reports will be provided to all members of the project management committee and to all missions with buy-ins.

Final authority for project management resides with the project CTO or ST/ED's designee. On a case-by-case basis, the CTO may delegate operational authority to USAIDs if this furthers realization of project objectives. If agreement can not be reached, regarding the delegation of authority, it shall revert to the S&T/ED CTO. This is pursuant to OP/W SOP-2, 'Standardized Buy-in Procedures' memo, issued February 1989:

'Missions need to understand that under a buy-in they do not have a direct relationship to the contractor. (Mission) discussions re the buy-in's appropriateness, cost estimates, etc., must be with the project officer sponsoring the contract and with OP. If there are performance problems, again the mission has no direct recourse against the contractor but must deal through OP.'

All buy-ins to ABEL must be (a) consistent with the scope of work of the master contract, and (b) fall within the existing contract ceiling.

External Evaluation

ST/ED is proposing to set aside funding for four evaluation exercises (2 mid-term, 2 finals) over the LOP. ST/ED, working with the ABEL contractor, will develop benchmarks and a procedure for assessing progress toward the project's objectives. These criteria should focus on the project's capacity to (a) diagnose country needs and match appropriate tools and resources, (b) identify technical advisors with appropriate skills and expertise, (c) realize a discrete impact in-country related to the improvement of educational quality and efficiency, and (d) delivery sound research activities and products. The inter-bureau committee will advise ST/ED and the independent evaluator on the project assessment activity.

SECTION 4. BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PLAN

Itemized Budget / Matched Against Activities and Inputs

Mentioned above, Figure 4 enumerates basic inputs (by functional category) for each project component. Figure 6 (following page) then translate these generic inputs into a more conventional financial plan.

USAID Buy-ins and Cost Accounting

Buy-ins from USAIDs, as with other ST/ED projects, will come in as amendments to the master ABEL contract. The prime contractor will maintain separate accounts for ST/ED versus mission funded activities. USAIDs with buy-ins must cover additional administrative and other core costs incurred directly from USAID activities.

Figure 6: Illustrative Budget
 Summary of Projected S&T Bureau Contribution
 (in \$000)

	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96	FY 97	FY 98	TOTAL
Salaries	90	173	175	175	175	178	178	188	195	80	1,607
Fringe Benefits (40% salaries)	36	69	70	70	70	71	71	75	78	32	643
TOTAL SALARIES & BENEFITS	126	242	245	245	245	249	249	263	273	112	2,250
DIRECT COSTS											
Short-term Consultants	82	148	195	205	205	200	140	100	90	90	1,455
Long-term Consultants	17	23	27	30	30	38	40	42	44	40	331
Transportation and Travel	75	87	100	105	100	100	100	90	80	80	917
Equipment	5	8	15	15	10	12	8	8	8	6	95
Materials and Supplies	35	45	45	45	45	45	32	27	32	23	371
Subcontracts	20	103	115	110	110	100	100	92	88	50	888
Evaluations and Miscellaneous		80	61	87	100	82	50	40	47	78	625
Other Direct Costs	25	110	120	120	117	97	50	30	30	60	759

Total Direct Costs	259	604	678	717	717	674	520	429	419	427	5,444
Total Salaries and Direct Costs	385	846	923	962	962	923	769	692	692	539	7,694
Indirect Costs (30% Sal./Dir. Cts)	115	254	277	288	288	277	231	208	208	161	2,306
TOTAL FDG (Sal. Direct & Indir Co)	500	1,100	1,200	1,250	1,250	1,200	1,000	900	900	700	10,000

File: ABEL2
 3/27/89

SECTION 5. PROJECT ANALYSES

Analysis of ST/ED's capacity to administer the ABEL project is covered above in Section 4. Here we review (a) economic implications of anticipated project activities, and (b) social or institutional dimensions related to the project.

Economic and Financial Analysis

Education plays a strategic role in development. While investment in education contributes directly to economic growth, improvements in the efficiency and equity with which the human resource base is developed are beneficial and necessary. The basic goal of ABEL is to increase the human resources base of less developed countries, particularly those facing extreme human resource deficiencies, by providing services needed to begin new projects in basic education and by applying research findings and products from across regions to improve the quality and increase the quantity of education services. To improve the distribution of educational benefits from this project, ABEL will include in its components a focus on activities to improve women's access to basic education.

While the cost of inputs for ABEL is easily quantifiable (\$40 million over 10 years), benefits accruing from this project are more difficult to assess. The question becomes what are the returns of the project relative to its costs. In a general sense, research literature on educational development indicates that improved educational services contribute to increases in the human resources base, reductions in the birthrate, improvements in health practices and increases in agricultural productivity.

ABEL by contributing to better designed education projects, will generate higher returns to AID and host country investments in education. Long-term improvements in efficiency, resulting from more effective planning, better policy choice and appropriate use of technology for the development of educational systems, are expected to exceed the 10% rate of return used as a benchmark for establishing investment credibility. Studies based upon wage employment data show, by way of a comparison of the higher lifetime productivity of educated workers to the cost of education, that investment in education yield substantial social rates of return. For example, crop yields of farmers with four years of education are 9% higher than those of farmers with no education.

Another economic indicator for the project is its contributions to GDP in those countries where activities are carried out. Numerous resource findings, as noted in the PID, indicate an average increase of productivity of approximately 7% for individuals with 4 or more years of schooling. Investment in primary education averages 13-15% in most developing countries.

While investment in education has been shown to generate respectable rates of return, funding levels for education have fallen between 1972 and 1985 from 13 to 10 percent of central government budgets. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the poorest countries showed declining expenditures for basic education, while low-income countries with higher per capita incomes increased their spending. To counterbalance this trend, ABEL will focus on improving the efficiency and quality of educational systems in developing countries. From policy reform at the ministry level to nuts-and-bolts educational management to classroom improvements, ABEL addresses, at varying levels, the problems of inefficiency and waste in educational systems.

Another project component of ABEL is to increase girl's access to basic education. Improving educational opportunities for women yields direct economic benefits as educated women are more likely to enter the labor force, thereby increasing economic growth. Research has also shown that birth rates decline as a result of increasing women's education, and the subsequent slower population growth also serves to enhance economic growth. Another benefit is the improved health of the children that women do have, thereby easing the strain on limited health resources and contributing healthy future workers to the labor force.

Costs associated directly with ABEL are one-time and non-recurrent. Interventions resulting from the assistance to missions and host countries may, however, have long-run budget implications due to the expected increases in enrollments that will result.

Social Soundness Analysis

No major social-cultural implementation problems are anticipated in carrying out the activities of the project. The dissemination component of the project will pay particular attention to social issues and cultural sensitivities in the design and marketing of strategies for technology transfer and training. Contractors will also have the advantage of lessons learned from experiences in developing prototype materials in other countries.

Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries of the project may be categorized into three groups:

1. Primary School-Age Children: Students between the ages of 5 and 15, especially currently under-served populations including girls will be the primary beneficiaries. By improving planning, resource allocation, and through the creation of cost-effective strategies to improve access to and the quality of schooling, the project will enable more children to enroll in school by the end of the project and to increase the amount they learn during their years in primary school. The quality of learning will also be increased because of improved management and instructional practices at the school and classroom level.

2. Teachers and Mid-level School Administrators: The "nuts and bolts" applications components of ABEL should increase the efficiency and performance level of practitioners charged with instructional supervision, system maintenance, and logistical arrangements of educational systems. With an enhanced set of management skills, administrators should for example, be able to increase the likelihood that learning materials reach students, that teachers are paid on schedule, and that school facilities are maintained to a degree conducive to learning. Emphasis will be placed on working within existing organizational and management structures to maximize the sustainability and appropriateness of the training and advice offered. Ultimately, students will be the beneficiaries of improved instructional practices and more efficient operational procedures. Benefits should be measurable in terms of higher levels of achievement and increased numbers of students completing the primary cycle.

3. Macro-level Planners and Policy-makers: ABEL will provide technical assistance to senior level officials from ministries of education, finance, and planning. Working within the framework of annual and long-range planning, contractors will provide assistance to public and private sector officials working in the education sectors on issues of resource allocation, policy choice, and system evaluation. If ABEL is successful, policy and resource adjustments, more accurate planning, and well-targetted analysis and evaluation should lead to more educational opportunities, of higher quality for primary age children.

Under-served Populations

A special emphasis in ABEL will be placed on those sub-populations that have historically lagged behind in terms of access to basic educational opportunities. The largest single group in this category is girls aged 5-15. Also included are peri-urban dwellers, and displaced persons. Although the project will emphasize improved access in general, resources and technical assistance will be reserved for special studies, including experimental pilot efforts, training and research that may significantly improve the educational status of underserved populations.

These activities will be carried out under the umbrella of overall system development and improvement. Sustainability will undergird all research and pilot activities.

SECTION 6. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Donors' New Basic Education Initiative

In early 1989, three multilateral donors (the World Bank, UNICEF, and UNESCO) formed a secretariat in New York to organize a worldwide conference entitled, 'Education for All.' The worldwide conference will be preceded by several regional meetings. Technical papers also will be drafted on various aspects of basic education. The overall effort aims to (a) mobilize greater donor and government support for basic education, and (b) map out policy and project strategies that are effective. AID's precise role in this donor effort has not been worked out. However, the ABEL project (and related AID bilateral basic education projects) certainly complement this renewed commitment by the multilateral donors.

Basic Education Earmark

The FY89 foreign assistance appropriations bill contained language directing AID to initiate several new basic education projects over the coming three years. The ABEL project will assist the regional bureaus and USAID missions in responding to this Congressional mandate. The legislation requires that AID spend \$64.8 million each year on basic education (an amount equal to 50% of the education and human resources account). 'Basic education' is defined as programs related to primary and secondary education. Funding to meet this spending level can come from the EHR account and/or from the Development Fund for Africa. The legislation stipulates that AID must initiate not fewer than two new basic education projects in FY89, and not fewer than three projects in each of FY90 and FY91. At least two of the three new starts in FY90 and FY91 must be in Africa.

SECTION 7. FIGURES AND APPENDICES

- Figure 1. ABEL project Log Frame
 - Figure 2. Matrix of project components
 - Figure 3. Overview of ABEL project Budget Parameters and Illustrative deliverables
 - Figure 4. Overview of ABEL Project Inputs by Project Component
 - Figure 5. ABEL implementation time table
 - Figure 6. Itemized ten-year projected S&T Bureau Contribution
-
- Appendix 1. ST/ED Tools, Products, Methods
 - Appendix 2. AID Sector Council 1988 basic education statement

Appendix 1

ST/ED Tools, Products, and Methods

The following list includes tools, methodologies, and research outputs developed under current ST/ED projects. The ABEL project contractor will consolidate and, in some cases, better package these products.

Improving Efficiency of Educational Systems (IEES) project

1. Model sector assessments from 7 countries, and a handbook for how to conduct full assessments and initiate dialog regarding policy and budget options.
2. Education ministry MIS software, developed in Botswana, Somalia, Yemen, Nepal, and Indonesia, and relying on commercially produced software (e.g., Lotus or dBase).
3. Variety of training materials for education policy and analysis, building MIS systems, and curriculum development.
4. Monographs on how to analyze educational quality and efficiency issues, including guidelines and elements for developing management information and policy reform strategies.
5. Frames and methods for developing competency-based curricula, linked to country-specific learning objectives.
6. Research findings and publication related to teacher motivation and incentives, community financing of basic education, and the reliability of MIS data.
7. Additional analytic work and research findings on a variety of topics, from vocational education to civil service reforms.

Basic Research and Implementation in Developing Education Systems (BRIDGES)

8. Software developed for operating ministry MIS systems, as well as for planning and projection models.
9. Computerized data base on what school inputs and management practices are related to higher pupil achievement.

10. Series of research reviews that cover developing country evidence on access to basic education, costing sector activities, and educational technologies.

Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI)

11. Radio curricula and teaching materials for primary school lessons (in several subjects).

12. Videotaped case studies of successful interactive radio projects.

13. Project descriptions and empirical evaluations of interactive radio projects in central America and Kenya.

14. Software for calculating costs of radio project components.

15. Software package for adapting existing national curricula to radio instruction.

Learning Technologies Project

16. Method and software for conducting school census and location surveys.

17. Project descriptions and empirical evaluations of computer assisted instruction.

18. 'Posterized' programmed teaching method.

Development Communications Clearinghouse

19. Profiles of various educational communications projects.

20. Issues of the 'Development Communications Clearinghouse' that describe various country activities and evaluation results.

Rural Satellite Project

21. Videotape description of the use of audio conferencing for inservice training and university distance teaching.

22. Reports on audio-conferencing projects in Indonesia, the Caribbean, and Peru.

23. Handbook for planning such communications projects.

Sector Council Statement

**EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
A.I.D.'S Role in the 1990's**

I. Background

Basic education is the catalyst for the growth and development of nations. Skills acquired in primary school are the building blocks of progress in all other sectors including higher levels of the education system itself. The Agency's human resource efforts, shaped by both external and internal forces, are wide ranging and include vocational skills and management training, higher education, participant training and telecommunications. Accomplishments in these sub-sectors are important and subsequent papers will be issued by the Sector Council on them. The intent of this document is to refocus the Agency on supporting the development of basic education as a cornerstone of A.I.D. assistance policy.

II. Rationale

For the past three decades A.I.D. has been a leader in developing strategies for improving access to and the quality of basic education. In 1982 PPC reviewed A.I.D. assistance to the education sector and concluded that "U.S. assistance had been singularly effective in helping to expand and improve primary education systems."

Paradoxically, the Agency's commitment of resources to basic education has fallen dramatically in the last few years. This drop has been due in part to a greatly expanded participant training effort and in part to a variety of other human resource activities (narcotics awareness, labor programs, PVOs, etc.) that are now funded out of the education and human resources account. As a result only a little over one percent of A.I.D. bilateral assistance last year was allocated to help countries improve their primary and secondary education systems. Almost half of this activity is in the Latin American region (El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and Jamaica). Less than \$7 million was obligated this year by A.I.D. on primary education in Africa.

A.I.D. support for basic education is minimal despite the fact that 46 A.I.D. assisted countries have less than 75% of their school cohorts completing the primary education cycle. In Asia, A.I.D. currently has no basic education activities in Bangladesh, India, or Pakistan, all of which have completion rates less than 50%. In FY 89 A.I.D. will support basic education activities in only 14 of the countries it is

assisting. In short, the Agency is making substantial investments in other sectors without ensuring that these be placed on a literate, numerate human resource foundation. Unless A.I.D. is willing to develop the human resource base necessary for sustained economic and social benefit, the development problems of today will be revisited in the year 2000 and on into the next century. There is no shortcut nor substitute for a fully developed basic education system. The story of development in the U.S. is testimony to this fact.

III. Links to Development

Basic education is a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for development. A developed country without an educated population is virtually inconceivable, and the linkages are well established between improved education and improved performance in agriculture, health and family planning. It is generally agreed that education is a key contributor to strengthening the democratic process.

"Basic education" is defined here as minimum skills and knowledge that a society determines to be essential to function as a responsible and productive member. At a minimum this includes basic literacy and numeracy. As national economies and cultures become more complex, the scope of basic skills required also grows more diverse. For the foreseeable future for most countries the education of children through formal schooling is the most cost-effective means of providing these skills.

A.I.D. policy should fix universal primary school completion, for boys and girls, as a priority assistance theme. An interim objective for the year 2000 is a minimum 80% primary school completion rate for all A.I.D.-assisted countries.

IV. A.I.D.'s Role

To strengthen the effectiveness of its overall assistance portfolio, A.I.D. has the responsibility to participate in raising the quality of basic education. Host countries and other donors will continue to invest in building more schools. Yet focusing only on school expansion will neither ensure that students leave school with functional literacy, nor encourage more cost-effective strategies that would help free resources to serve more pupils. A.I.D. has the capacity to remedy this problem. It lacks only the will.

The Sector Council recommends that the Agency comply with the guidance contained in the Agency strategy in the Blueprint for Development as well as in the 1983 A.I.D. Sector Strategy for Education:

"When less than two-thirds of the eligible age group are completing at least the first four years of primary school and there is a country policy commitment to increased internal efficiency [effective utilization of scarce resources], the improvement of primary education is to be given priority for A.I.D. assistance."

The Sector Council recognizes that in some countries, lack of infrastructural development, organizational unsettledness within the ministry of education, and other problems, may place education investments at high risk. In those special situations, it is incumbent upon the missions to provide a thorough and complete justification in its CDSS and action plans for why the Council recommendations (below) should not apply and how they are addressing the problem of inadequate basic education and its impact on assistance to other sectors.

To reemphasize the Agency's recognition of the central role basic education development plays in its assistance program the Council strongly endorses the following:

1. A.I.D. leadership needs to make clear through direct guidance to the field that enhancing basic education is to be supported wherever possible within USAID programs, and is in all cases to be encouraged as part of policy dialogue agendas and in discussions with other donors.

- o Countries receiving A.I.D. assistance for basic education should demonstrate willingness to establish indicators of educational quality and efficiency, and set concrete benchmarks for tracking progress.

2. In countries with primary school completion rates less than 70%, each mission should be required to include some form of assistance to the development of basic education in their portfolio.

- o When policies constrain the expansion and improvement of basic education, sector analysis and policy dialogue should be prominent in initial program involvement.

3. In countries with especially acute budget problems, program assistance in addition to technical assistance through projects should be considered.

4. Regional and Central A.I.D. Bureaus should have sufficient resources for assisting missions in identifying problems, designing strategies, and when appropriate,

supporting regional or international institutions, programs or initiatives that complement national and bilateral programs to promote primary schooling.

V. A.I.D.'s Focus

An education system requires a number of essential ingredients: basic school facilities, access to instructional resources, textbooks, reading materials, teachers with at least a minimum level of competence, and a reasonably efficient school and system administration. A.I.D. supports broad, comprehensive reform of the basic education system. We realize, however, that this reform is primarily the developing country's responsibility. It is critically important that we work with the country and other donors, especially the World Bank, so that a coherent and comprehensive reform effort is put forth and that our resources are applied where they will be most effective.

The Sector Council endorses a basic education assistance effort designed to achieve the main objective of assisting a greater number of children to achieve higher levels of learning.

The Sector Council endorses three types of activities on the focus of project and program efforts:

1. Policy Dialogue: A.I.D. should collaborate with host governments to assess what elements of basic education systems restrict improvements in the quality and efficiency of the system. The dialogue should examine the appropriateness of central policies, budget priorities, and assistance opportunities. This process must be broadly participatory. Missions with even the most modest budgets can engage in policy dialogue and analysis of sub-sectoral issues.
2. Management: Efficient utilization of resources, both human and material, is vital to protecting and capitalizing on education investments. A.I.D. should concentrate project assistance on developing the skills of school principals, local education leaders and central ministry decision-makers. Planning, analysis and evaluation capacities must be strengthened. Budgeting, logistical systems, data systems, personnel systems are the areas in which A.I.D. could provide very practical and critically needed help. Even in countries where A.I.D. does not have a bilateral education program, training of education administrators could be a highly effective way to improve the basic education system.

3. Learning Materials: Textbooks, instructional guides, worksheets and other learning media provide immediate returns in the form of higher student achievement. Project assistance that supports the production, development, dissemination, utilization and evaluation of these materials should be a high A.I.D. priority. A.I.D. should continue its support for "learning technologies", ranging from simple writing pads for pupils to interactive radio. Levels of support and duration of assistance can vary by mission resources. Investments in pioneer efforts that may realize more efficient, effective use of education resources should continue to be a hallmark of A.I.D. strategy.

VI. Conclusion

Support for primary education is an investment not just in the education sector. It represents a commitment to building a solid foundation on which to construct a comprehensive, cross-sectoral assistance portfolio. A.I.D. has available the fiscal resources, the technical skills, and the experience to facilitate a major change in the educational base of the countries it assists. With appropriate guidance to the field from Agency leadership, coupled with the technical services, programmatic assistance and field support that Regional and Central Bureaus are prepared to offer, school systems adequate to create and sustain a literate and numerate human resource foundation can be created by the year 2000. This can be accomplished in any country for which A.I.D. chooses to make a serious effort and in which it collaborates actively with the World Bank and other donors.

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